



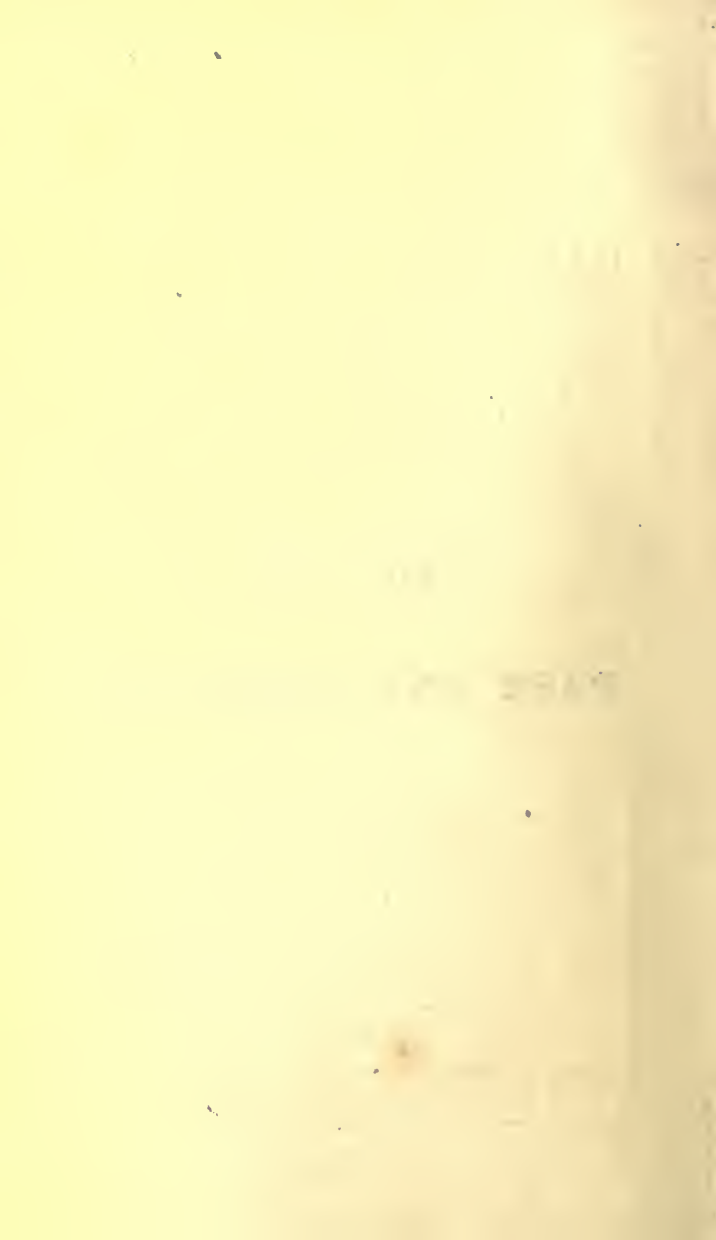




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ENGLISH:

PAST AND PRESENT.



George D. Wood.

ENGLISH:
PAST AND PRESENT.

FIVE LECTURES.

BY

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PREFACE. 1855

A SERIES of four lectures which I delivered last spring to the pupils of King's College School, London, supplied the foundation to this present volume. These lectures, which I was obliged to prepare in haste, on a brief invitation, and under the pressure of other engagements, were subsequently enlarged and recast; and delivered in the autumn somewhat more nearly in their present shape to the pupils of the Training School, Winchester; although of course with those alterations, omissions and additions, which the difference in my hearers suggested as necessary or desirable. I have found it convenient to keep the lectures, as regards the persons presumed to be addressed, in that earlier form which I had sketched out at the first; and as it helps much to keep lectures vivid and real that one should have some well defined audience, if not actually before one, yet before the mind's eye, to suppose myself throughout addressing my first hearers. I have supposed myself, that is, addressing a body of young Englishmen, all with a fair amount of classical knowledge (in my explanations I have sometimes had others with less than theirs in my eye), not wholly unac-

quainted with modern languages ; but not yet with any special designation as to their future work ; having only as yet marked out to them the duty in general of living lives worthy of those who have England for their native country, and English for their native tongue. To lead such through a more intimate knowledge of this into a greater love of that, has been a principal aim which I have set before myself throughout.

In a few places I have been obliged again to go over ground which I had before gone over in a little book, "*On the Study of Words* ;" but I believe that I have never merely repeated myself, nor given to the readers of my former work and now of this any right to complain that I am compelling them to travel a second time by the same paths. At least it has been my endeavour, whenever I have found myself at points where the two books come necessarily into contact, that what was treated with any fulness before, should be here touched on more lightly ; and only what there was slightly handled, should here be entered on more at large.

ITCHENSTOKE, *Feb.* 7, 1855.

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ENGLISH,

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LECTURE I.

THE ENGLISH A COMPOSITE LANGUAGE.

I HAVE chosen our English language, its past and its present, as the subject of that short course of lectures, which I have been invited to deliver to you in this place. It is an argument, which I confidently trust will find an answer and an echo in the hearts of all who hear me; which would have found such at any time; which will do so especially at the present. For these are times which naturally rouse into liveliest activity all our latent affections for the land of our birth. It is one of the compensations, indeed the greatest of all, for the wastefulness, the woe, the cruel losses of war, that it causes a people to know itself a people; and leads each one to esteem and prize most that which he has in common with his fellow countrymen, and not now any longer those things which separate and divide him from them.

And the love of our own language, what is it in fact, but the love of our country expressing itself in one particular direction? If the great acts of

that nation to which we belong are precious to us, if we feel ourselves made greater by their greatness, summoned to a nobler life by the nobleness of Englishmen who have already lived and died, and bequeathed to us a name which must not by us be made less, what exploits of theirs can well be nobler, what can more clearly point out their native land and ours as having fulfilled a glorious past, as being destined for a glorious future, than that they should have acquired for themselves and for those who come after them a clear, a strong, an harmonious, a noble language? For all this bears witness to corresponding merits in those that speak it, to clearness of mental vision, to strength, to harmony, to nobleness in them that have gradually formed and shaped it to be the utterance of their inmost life and being.

To know of this language, the stages which it has gone through, the quarters from which its riches have been derived, the gains which it is now making, the perils which have threatened or are threatening it, the losses which it has sustained, the latent capacities which may yet be in it, waiting to be evoked, the points in which it is superior to, in which it comes short of, other tongues, all this may well be the object of worthy ambition to every one of us. So may we hope to be ourselves guardians of its purity, and not corruptors of it; to introduce, it may be, others into an intelligent knowledge of that with which we shall have ourselves more than a merely superficial acquaintance; to bequeath it to those who come after us not worse than we received it ourselves. “Spartam nactus

es; hanc exorna,"—this should be our motto in respect at once of our country, and of our country's tongue.

Nor shall we, I trust, any of us feel this subject to be alien or remote from the purposes which have brought us to study within these walls. It is true that we are mainly occupied here in studying other tongues rather than our own. The time we bestow upon it is small as compared with that bestowed on those others. And yet one of our great purposes in learning them is that we may better understand this. Nor ought any other to dispute with it the first and foremost place in our reverence, our gratitude, and our love.

But the knowledge of this, like all other knowledge which is worth attaining, is only to be attained at the price of labour and pains. The language which at this day we speak is the result of processes which have been going forward for hundreds and for thousands of years. Nay more, it is not too much to affirm that processes modifying the English which at the present day we write and speak, have been at work from the first day that man, being gifted with discourse of reason, projected his thought from out himself, and embodied and contemplated it in his word. Which things being so, if we would understand this language as it now is, we must know something of it as it has been; we must be able to measure, however roughly, the forces which have been at work upon it, moulding and shaping it into the forms which it now wears. At the same time various prudential considerations must deter-

mine for us how far up we will endeavour to trace the course of its history. There are those who may seek to trace our language to the forests of Germany, to investigate its relation to all the kindred tongues that were there spoken; again, to follow it up, till it and they are seen descending from an elder stock; nor once to pause, till they have assigned to it its place not merely in respect of that small group of languages which are immediately round it, but in respect of all the tongues and languages of the earth. I can imagine few studies of a more surpassing interest than this.

Others, however, must be content with seeking such insight into their native language as may be within the reach of all who, unable to make this the subject of especial research, possessing neither that vast compass of knowledge, nor that immense apparatus of books, not being at liberty to dedicate to it that devotion almost of a life which, followed out to the full, it would require, have yet an intelligent interest in their mother tongue, and desire to learn as much of its growth and history and construction as may be reasonably deemed within their reach. To such as these I shall suppose myself to be speaking. It would be a piece of great presumption in me to undertake to speak to any other, or to assume any other ground than this for myself.

I know there are some, who, when they are invited to enter at all upon the past history of the language, are inclined to make answer—"To what end such studies to us? Why cannot we leave them to a few antiquaries and grammarians!

Sufficient to us to know the laws of our present English, to obtain an accurate acquaintance with the language as we now find it, without concerning ourselves with the phases through which it has previously past." This may sound plausible enough; and I can quite understand a real lover of his native tongue, supposing he had not bestowed much thought upon the subject, arguing in this manner. And yet indeed such argument proceeds altogether on a mistake. One sufficient reason why we should occupy ourselves with the past of our language is, because the present is only intelligible in the light of the past, often of a very remote past indeed. There are anomalies out of number now existing in our language, which the pure logic of grammar is quite incapable of explaining; which nothing but a knowledge of its historic evolutions, and of the disturbing forces which have made themselves felt therein, will ever enable us to explain. Even as, again, unless we possess some knowledge of the past, it is impossible that we can ourselves advance a single step in the unfolding of the latent capabilities of the language, without the danger of some barbarous violation of its very primary laws.

The plan which I have laid down for myself, and to which I propose to adhere, in this lecture and in those which will succeed it, is as follows. In this my first lecture I will ask you to consider the language as now it is, to decompose with me some specimens of it, to prove by these means, of what elements it is compact, and what functions in it these elements or component parts severally serve;

nor shall I leave this subject without asking you to admire the happy marriage in our tongue of the languages of the north and south, an advantage which it alone among all the languages of Europe enjoys. Having thus presented to ourselves the body which we wish to submit to scrutiny, and having become acquainted, however slightly, with its composition, I shall invite you to go back with me, and trace some of the leading changes to which in time past it has been submitted, and through which it has arrived at what it now is ; and these changes I shall contemplate under four aspects, dedicating a lecture to each ;—changes which have resulted from the birth of new or the reception of foreign words ;—changes consequent on the rejection or extinction of words or powers once possessed by the language ;—changes through the altered meaning of words ;—and lastly, as not unworthy of our attention, but often growing out of very deep roots, changes in the orthography of words. I shall everywhere presume, as I feel I have a right to do, an acquaintance on your parts with the leading outlines of English history.

I proceed at once to the special subject of my lecture of to-day.

And first, starting from the recognized fact that the English is not a simple but a composite language, made up of several elements, in the same way as we are a people made up of Anglo-Saxons and Anglo-Normans, with not a few accessions from other quarters beside, I would suggest to you the profit and instruction which we might

derive from seeking to resolve it into its component parts—from taking, that is, any passage from an English author, distributing the words of which it is made up according to the languages from which we have drawn them ; estimating the relative numbers and proportions, which these languages have severally lent us ; as well as the character of the words which they have thrown into the common stock of our tongue.

Suppose the English language to be divided into a hundred parts ; of these, to make a rough distribution, sixty would be Saxon, thirty would be Latin (including of course the Latin which has come to us through the French), five would be Greek ; we should thus have assigned ninety-five parts, leaving the other five, perhaps too large a residue, to be divided among all the other languages from which we have adopted isolated words. Thus, just to enumerate a few of these latter ; we have a certain number of Hebrew words, mostly, if not entirely belonging to religious matters, as ‘amen,’ ‘cabala,’ ‘cherub,’ ‘ephod,’ ‘hallelujah,’ ‘jubilee,’ ‘manna,’ ‘Messiah,’ ‘sabbath,’ ‘seraph.’ The Arabic words in our language are more numerous ; we have several arithmetical and astronomical terms as ‘algebra,’ ‘cypher,’* ‘zero,’ ‘zenith,’ ‘nadir,’ ‘talisman,’ ‘almanach ;’ and chemical, for the Arabs were the chemists, no less than the astronomers and arithmeticians of the middle ages ; as ‘alkali,’ ‘alembic,’ ‘elixir,’ ‘alcohol ;’ add to

* But see Grimm’s *Mythologie*, p. 985.

these the names of animals or articles of merchandize first introduced by them to the notice of Western Europe, as 'giraffe,' 'gazelle,' 'saffron,' 'lemon,' 'orange,' 'sherbet,' 'lute,' 'syrup,' 'artichoke,' 'mattrass,' 'jar,' 'assegai,' 'barragan,' 'coffee,' 'sugar,' 'amber,' 'mummy,' 'jasmin,' 'crimson;' and some further terms, 'assassin,' 'vizier,' 'divan,' 'sultan,' 'admiral,' 'arsenal,' 'carat,' 'tarif,' 'sofa,' 'caffre,' 'magazine;' and I believe we shall have nearly completed the list.—We have moreover a few Persian words, as 'bazaar,' 'lilac,' 'pagoda,' 'caravan,' 'azure,' 'scarlet,' 'taffeta,' 'saraband;' of 'scimitar' it can, I believe, only be said that it is Eastern. We have also a very few Turkish, as 'tulip,' 'turban,' 'chouse,' 'dragoman,' or as it used to be spelt, 'truchman'—this last having hardly a right to be called English.

The new world has given us a certain number of words, Indian and other—'tobacco,' 'chocolate,' 'potato,' 'maize' (Haytian), 'condor,' 'hamoc,' 'cacique,' 'wigwam;' and if 'hurricane' is a word which Europe originally derived from the Caribbean islanders, it should of course be included in this list.

To come nearer home—we have a certain number of Italian words, as 'bandit,' 'charlatan,' 'pantaloen,' 'gazette.' We have some Spanish, as 'musquito,' 'negro,' 'duenna,' 'punctilio,' 'alcove,'* 'alligator,' 'gala,' 'cambist,' 'palaver.' A good many of our sea terms are Dutch, as 'sloop,'

* On the question whether this ought not to have been included among the Arabic, see Diez, *Wörterbuch d. Roman. Sprachen*, p. 10.

‘schooner,’ ‘yacht.’—Celtic *things* are for the most part designated among us by Celtic words ; such as ‘bard,’ ‘kilt,’ ‘clan,’ ‘pibroch,’ ‘plaid,’ ‘reel.’ Nor only such as these, which are all of them comparatively of modern introduction, but a considerable number, how large a number is yet a very unsettled question, of words which at a much earlier date found admission into our tongue, are derived from this quarter.

Now, of course, I have no right to presume that any among us are equipped with that knowledge of other tongues which shall enable us to detect of ourselves and at once the nationality of all or most of the words which we may meet—some of them greatly disguised, and having undergone manifold transformations in the process of their adoption among us ; but only that we have such helps at command and within our reach in the way of dictionaries and the like, and so much diligence in their use, as will enable us to discover the quarter from which the words which we meet have reached us ; and I will confidently say that few studies of the kind will be more fruitful, will suggest more various matter of reflection, will more lead you into the secrets of the English tongue, than an analysis of a certain number of passages drawn from different authors, such as I have just now proposed. For this analysis you will take some passage of English verse or prose—say the first ten lines of *Paradise Lost*—or the Lord’s Prayer—or the 23rd Psalm ; you will distribute the whole body of words contained in that passage,

of course not omitting the smallest, according to their nationalities—writing, it may be, A over every Anglo-Saxon word, L over every Latin, and so on with the others, if any other should occur in the passage which you have submitted to this examination. When this is done, you will count up the *number* of those which each language contributes; again, you will note the *character* of the words derived from each quarter.

Yet here, before I pass further, I would observe in respect of those which come from the Latin, that it will be desirable further to mark whether they are directly from it, and such might be marked L¹, or only mediately from it, and to us directly from the French, which would be L², or L at second-hand—our English word being only in the second generation descended from the Latin, not the child, but the child's child. There is a rule that holds pretty constantly good, by which you may generally determine this point. It is this,—that if a word be directly from the Latin, it will not have undergone any alteration or modification in its form and shape, save only as respects the termination—‘innocentia’ will have become ‘innocency,’ ‘natio’ will have become ‘nation,’ ‘firmamentum’ will have become ‘firmament,’ but nothing more. On the other hand, if it comes *through* the French, it will generally be considerably altered in its passage. It will have undergone a process of lubrication; its sharply defined Latin outline will in good part have departed from it; thus ‘crown’ is from ‘corona,’ but through ‘couronne,’ and itself a dis-

syllable, 'coroune,' in our earlier English; 'treasure' is from 'thesaurus,' but through 'trésor;' 'emperor' is the Latin 'imperator,' but it was first 'empereur.' It will not at all uncommonly happen that the substantive has passed to us through this process, having come through the intervention of the French; while we have only felt at a later period our want of the adjective also, which we have proceeded to borrow direct from the Latin. Thus, 'people' is indeed 'populus,' but it was 'peuple' first, while 'popular' is a direct transfer of a Latin vocable into our English glossary. So too 'enemy' is 'inimicus,' but it was first softened in the French, and had its Latin physiognomy to a great degree obliterated, while 'inimical' is Latin throughout; 'parish' is 'paroisse,' but 'parochial' is 'parochialis.'

Sometimes you will find in English what I may call a double adoption of a Latin word; I mean that we have many Latin words which now make part of our vocabulary in two shapes, in both these forms ('doppelgängers' the Germans would call them); directly from the Latin, and mediately through the French. In these cases it will be particularly noticeable how that which has come through the French has been shaped and moulded, generally cut short, often cut a syllable or two shorter (for the French devours letters and syllables), than the Latin. I will mention a few examples; 'secure' and 'sure,' both from the Latin 'securus,' but one directly, the other through the French; 'fidelity' and 'fealty,' both from the Latin 'fidelitas,' but one

directly, the other at second-hand; 'species' and 'spice,' both from the Latin 'species,' spices being properly only *kinds* of aromatic drugs; 'blaspheme' and 'blame,' both from 'blasphemare,' but 'blame' immediately from 'blâmer;,' add to these 'granary' and 'garner;,' 'tradition' and 'treason;,' 'regality' and 'royalty;,' 'hospital' and 'hotel;,' 'persecute,' and 'pursue;,' 'superficies' and 'surface;,' 'faction' and 'fashion;,' 'particle' and 'parcel;,' 'redemption' and 'ransom;,' 'potion' and 'poison;,' 'oration' and 'orison.*' In naming these I have ever named the Latin form before the French; but the reverse is in almost every case the order in which the words were adopted by us; we had 'pursue' before 'persecute,' 'spice' before 'species,' 'royalty' before 'regality,' and so for the most part with the others.†

The explanation of this greater change which the earlier form of the word has undergone, is not far to seek. Words which have been introduced into a language at an early period, when as yet writing is rare, and books are few or none, when therefore orthography is unfixed, or being purely phonetic,

* Somewhat different from this, yet itself also curious is the passing of an Anglo-Saxon word in two different forms into English, and continuing in both; thus, 'desk' and 'dish,' both the Anglo-Saxon 'disc,' the German 'tisch;,' 'girdle' and 'kirtle,' both of them corresponding to the German 'gürtel;,' already in Anglo-Saxon a double spelling, 'gyrdel' 'cyrte,' had prepared for the double words.

† We have in the same way double adoptions from the Greek, one direct, one through some other language; thus, 'adamant' and 'diamond;,' 'monastery' and 'minster;,' 'scandal' and 'slander.'

cannot properly be said to exist at all, words which thus for a long while live orally on the lips of men, before they are set down in writing, these we shall for the most part find reshaped and remoulded by the people who have adopted them, entirely assimilated to *their* language in form and termination, so as in a little while to be almost or quite undistinguishable from natives. On the other hand a most effectual check to this process, a process sometimes barbarizing and defacing, however it may be the only one which makes the new entirely homogeneous with the old, is imposed by the existence of a much written language and a full formed literature. The foreign word, being once adopted into these, can no longer undergo a thorough transformation. For the most part the utmost which use and familiarity can do with it now, is to cause the gradual dropping of the foreign termination. Yet this too is not unimportant; it often goes far to making a home for a word, and hindering it from wearing the appearance of a foreigner and stranger.*

* The French itself has something of the same kind of double adoption from the Latin, and one quite bearing out what has been said above: or, in the case of the French, we should perhaps more accurately call it a double formation, one going far back in the history of the language, the other belonging to a later and more literary period. Thus from 'separare' is derived 'sevrer,' to separate the child from its mother's milk, to wean, but also 'séparer,' without this special sense; from 'pastor' 'pâtre,' a shepherd in the literal, and 'pasteur' the same in a tropical, sense; from 'catena,' 'chaîne' and 'cadène;' from 'pensare,' 'peser' and 'penser;' from 'captiveus,' 'chétif' and 'captif;' from 'nativus,' 'naïf'

But to return from this digression—I said just now that you would learn very much from observing and calculating the proportions in which the words of one descent and those of another occur in any passage which you analyse. Thus examine the Lord's Prayer. It consists of exactly sixty words. You will find that only the following six claim the rights of Latin citizenship—'trespasses,' 'trespass,' 'temptation,' 'deliver,' 'power,' 'glory.' Nor would it be very difficult to substitute for any one of these a Saxon word. Thus for 'trespasses' might be substituted 'sins;' for 'deliver' 'free;' for 'power' 'might;' for 'glory' 'brightness;' which would only leave 'temptation,' about which there could be the slightest difficulty, and 'trials,' though we now ascribe to the word a somewhat different sense, would in fact exactly correspond to it. This is but a small percentage, six words in sixty, the proportion, that is, of ten in the hundred; and we often light upon a still smaller proportion. Thus take the three first verses of the 23rd Psalm:—"The Lord is my Shepherd; therefore can I lack nothing; He shall feed me in a green pasture, and lead me forth beside the waters of comfort; He shall convert my soul, and bring me forth in the paths of righteousness for his Name's

and 'natif;' from 'designare,' 'dessiner' and 'désigner;' from 'decimare,' 'décimer' and 'dimer;' from 'homo' 'homme' and 'on;' from 'strictus,' 'étroit' and 'strict;' from 'sacramentum,' 'serment' and 'sacrement;' from 'ministerium,' 'métier' and 'ministère.'

sake." Here are forty-five words, and only three of these are Latin, 'pasture,' 'comfort,' and 'convert ;' and for every one of these too it would be easy to substitute a word of Saxon origin ; little more, that is, than the proportion of seven in the hundred ; while, still stronger than this, in five verses out of Genesis, containing one hundred and thirty words, there are only five not Saxon, less, that is, than four per cent.

Shall we therefore conclude that these are the proportions in which the Anglo-Saxon and Latin elements of the language stand to one another ? If they are so, then my former proposal to express their relations by sixty and thirty was greatly at fault ; and seventy and twenty, or even eighty and ten, would fall short of adequately representing the real predominance of the Saxon over the Latin element of the language. But it is not so ; the Anglo-Saxon words by no means outnumber the Latin in the degree which the analysis of those passages would seem to imply. It is not that there are so many more Anglo-Saxon words, but that the words which there are, being words of more primary necessity, are so many more times used, so much more frequently recur. The proportions which the dictionary, that is, of the language *at rest* would furnish, are very different from these, which the analysis of sentences, or of the language *in motion*, gives.

The notice of this fact will lead us to some very important conclusions as to the *character* of the words which the Saxon and the Latin severally

furnish ; and principally to this :—that while the English language is thus compact in the main of these two elements, we must not for all this regard these two as making, one and the other, exactly the same *kind* of contributions to it. On the contrary their contributions are of very different character. The Anglo-Saxon is not so much, as I have just called it, one element of the English language, as the foundation of it, the basis. All its joints, its whole *articulation*, its sinews and its ligaments, the great body of articles, pronouns, conjunctions, prepositions, numerals, auxiliary verbs, all smaller words which serve to knit together and bind the larger into sentences, these, not to speak of the grammatical structure of the language, are exclusively Saxon. The Latin may contribute its tale of bricks, yea, of goodly and polished hewn stones to the spiritual building, but the mortar, with all that holds and binds these together, and constitutes them into a house, is Saxon throughout. I remember Selden in his *Table Talk* using another comparison ; but to the same effect : “ If you look upon the language spoken in the Saxon time, and the language spoken now, you will find the difference to be just as if a man had a cloak which he wore plain in Queen Elizabeth’s days, and since, here has put in a piece of red, and there a piece of blue, and here a piece of green, and there a piece of orange-tawny. We borrow words from the French, Italian, Latin, as every pedantic man pleases.”

I believe this to be the law which holds good in respect of all composite languages. However com-

posite they may be, yet they are only so in regard of their words. There may be a medley of these, some coming from one quarter, some from another ; but there is never a mixture of grammatical forms and inflexions. One or other language entirely predominates here, and everything has to conform and subordinate itself to the laws of this ruling and ascendant language. The Anglo-Saxon is the ruling language in our present English ; while that has thought good to drop its genders, even so the French substantives which come among us, must also leave theirs behind them ; as in like manner the French verbs must renounce their own conjugations, and adapt themselves to ours.*

At the same time the secondary or superinduced language, even while it is quite unable to force any of its forms on the language which receives its words, may yet compel that to renounce a portion of its own forms, by the impossibility of making them fit the new comers ; and thus it may exert, although not a positive, yet a negative, influence on the grammar of the other tongue. It has been so, as is generally admitted, in the instance of our own . “ When the English language was inundated by a vast influx of French words, few, if any, French forms were received into its grammar ; but the Saxon forms soon dropped away, because they did not suit the new roots ; and the genius of the lan-

* W. Schlegel (*Indische Bibliothek*, i. 284): Coëunt quidem paullatim in novum corpus peregrina vocabula, sed grammatica linguarum, unde petitæ sunt, ratio perit.

guage, from having to deal with the newly imported words in a rude state, was induced to neglect the inflexions of the native ones. This for instance led to the introduction of the *s* as the universal termination of all plural nouns, which agreed with the usage of the French language, and was not alien from that of the Saxon, but was merely an extension of the termination of the ancient masculine to other classes of nouns.”*

If any of you should wish to convince yourselves by actual experience, of the fact which I just now asserted, namely that the radical constitution of the language is Saxon, I would say, Try to compose a sentence of ten words and no more on any subject you please, employing therein only words which are of a Latin derivation. You will find it impossible, or next to impossible, to do it; whichever way you turn, some obstacle will meet you in the face. And while it is thus with the Latin, whole pages might be written, I do not say in philosophy or theology or upon any abstruser subject, but on familiar matters of common everyday life, in which every word should be of Saxon derivation, not one of Latin; and these, pages in which with the exercise of a very little skill, all appearance of awkwardness and constraint should be avoided, so that it should never occur to the reader, unless otherwise informed, that the writer had submitted himself to this restraint and limitation in the words

* J. Grimm, quoted in the *Philological Museum*, vol. i. p. 667.

which he employed, and was only drawing them from one section of the English language. Sir Thomas Browne has given several long paragraphs so constructed. Take for instance the following : "The first and foremost step to all good works is the dread and fear of the Lord of heaven and earth, which through the Holy Ghost enlighteneth the blindness of our sinful hearts to tread the ways of wisdom, and lead our feet into the land of blessing."* This is not stiffer than the ordinary English of his time. I would suggest to you at your leisure to make these two experiments. Endeavour first to compose a sentence of some length upon any possible subject, from which every word which the Saxon has contributed to our tongue shall be rigidly excluded : you will find it, at least if I may judge by my own experience, wholly beyond your power. On the other hand with a little patience and ingenuity you will be able to compose a connected narrative of any length you please into which no Latin word shall be admitted, in which none but Saxon shall be employed.

While thus I bring before you the fact that it would be quite possible to write English, foregoing altogether the use of the Latin portion of the language, I would not have you therefore to conclude that this portion of the language is of little value, or that we could draw from the resources of our Teutonic tongue efficient substitutes for all the words which it has contributed to our glossary. I

* *Works*, vol. 4, p. 202.

am persuaded that we could not ; and, if we could, that it would not be desirable. I mention this, because there is sometimes a regret expressed that we have not kept our language more free from the admixture of Latin, a suggestion made that we should even now endeavour to keep under the Latin element of it, and remove it as far as possible out of sight. I remember Lord Brougham urging upon the students at Glasgow as a help to writing good English, that they should seek as far as possible to rid their diction of long-tailed words in 'osity' and 'ation.' He plainly intended to indicate by this phrase all learned Latin words, or words derived from the Latin. This exhortation rests on a certain amount of truth ; no doubt there were writers of a former age, Samuel Johnson in the last century, Cudworth and Sir Thomas Browne in the century preceding, who gave undue preponderance to the learned, or Latin, portion in our language ; and very much of its charm, of its homely strength and beauty, of its most popular and truest idioms, would have perished from it, had they succeeded in persuading others to write as they had written.

But at the same time we could almost as ill do without this side of the language as the other. It represents and supplies as real needs as the other does. Philosophy and science and the arts of a high civilization find their utterance in the Latin words of our language, or, if not in the Latin, in the Greek, which for present purposes may be grouped with them. How should they have found it in the

other branch of our language, among a people who had never cultivated any of these? And while it is undoubtedly of importance to keep this within due bounds, and, *cæteris paribus*, it will in general be advisable, when a Latin and a Saxon word offer themselves to our choice, to use the Saxon rather than the other, to speak of 'happiness' rather than 'felicity,' 'almighty' rather than 'omnipotent,' a 'forerunner' rather than a 'precursor,' still these latter must be regarded as much denizens in the language as the former, no alien interlopers, but possessing the rights of citizenship as fully as the most Saxon word of them all. One part of the language is not to be cultivated at the expense of the other; the Saxon at the cost of the Latin, as little as the Latin at the cost of the Saxon. "Both are indispensable; and speaking generally without stopping to distinguish as to subject, both are *equally* indispensable. Pathos, in situations which are homely, or at all connected with domestic affections, naturally moves by Saxon words. Lyrical emotion of every kind, which (to merit the name of *lyrical*) must be in the state of flux and reflux, or, generally, of agitation, also requires the Saxon element of our language. And why? Because the Saxon is the aboriginal element; the basis and not the superstructure: consequently it comprehends all the ideas which are natural to the heart of man and to the elementary situations of life. And although the Latin often furnishes us with duplicates of these ideas, yet the Saxon, or monosyllabic part, has the advantage of precedence in our use and

knowledge; for it is the language of the nursery whether for rich or poor, in which great philological academy no toleration is given to words in 'osity' or 'ation.' There is therefore a great advantage, as regards the consecration to our feelings, settled by usage and custom upon the Saxon strands in the mixed yarn of our native tongue. And universally, this may be remarked—that wherever the passion of a poem is of that sort which *uses*, *presumes*, or *postulates* the ideas, without seeking to extend them, Saxon will be the 'cocoon' (to speak by the language applied to silkworms), which the poem spins for itself. But on the other hand, where the motion of the feeling is *by* and *through* the ideas, where (as in religious or meditative poetry—Young's, for instance, or Cowper's), the pathos creeps and kindles underneath the very tissues of the thinking, there the Latin will predominate; and so much so that, whilst the flesh, the blood, and the muscle, will be often almost exclusively Latin, the articulations only, or hinges of connection, will be Anglo-Saxon."*

I do not know where we could find a happier example of the preservation of the golden mean in this matter than in our authorized Version of the Bible. One of the chiefest among the minor and secondary blessings which that Version has conferred on the nation or nations drawing spiritual life from it,—a blessing not small in itself, but only small by comparison with the infinitely higher blessings

* De Quincey, *On Wordsworth*.

whereof it is the vehicle to them,—is the happy wisdom, the instinctive tact with which its authors have steered between any futile mischievous attempt to ignore the full rights of the Latin part of the language on the one side, and on the other any burdening of their Version with such a multitude of learned Latin terms as should cause it to forfeit its homely character, and shut up great portions of it from the understanding of plain and unlearned men. There is a remarkable confession to this effect, to the wisdom, in fact, which guided them from above, to the providence that overruled their work, an honorable acknowledgment of the immense superiority in this respect of our English Version over the Romish or Douay, made by one now unhappily familiar with the latter, as once he was with our own. One of those who has forsaken the communion of the English Church has expressed himself in deeply touching tones of lamentation over all, which in forsaking our translation, he feels himself to have foregone and lost. These are his words: “Who will not say that the uncommon beauty and marvellous English of the Protestant Bible is not one of the great strongholds of heresy in this country? It lives on the ear, like a music that can never be forgotten, like the sound of church bells, which the convert hardly knows how he can forego. Its felicities often seem to be almost things rather than mere words. It is part of the national mind, and the anchor of national seriousness. . . . The memory of the dead passes into it. The potent traditions of childhood are stereotyped in its verses.

The power of all the griefs and trials of a man is hidden beneath its words. It is the representative of his best moments, and all that there has been about him of soft and gentle and pure and penitent and good speaks to him for ever out of his English Bible. . . . It is his sacred thing, which doubt has never dimmed, and controversy never soiled. In the length and breadth of the land there is not a Protestant with one spark of religiousness about him, whose spiritual biography is not in his Saxon Bible.”*

Such are his touching words ; and certainly one has only to compare this version of our ours with the Douay, and the far greater excellence of our own reveals itself at once. I am not speaking now in respect of superior accuracy of scholarship ; nor yet of the absence of by-ends, of all turning and twisting the translation to support certain doctrines ; nor yet do I allude to the fact that one translation is from the original Greek, the other only from the Latin, and thus the translation of a translation, often reproducing the mistakes of that translation ; but, putting aside all considerations such as these, I would now speak only of the superiority of the diction in which the meaning, be it correct or incorrect, is conveyed to English readers. I open the Douay version at Gal. v. 19, where the long list of the “works of the flesh,” and “fruit of the Spirit,” is given. But what could a mere English reader make of words such as these—‘impudicity,’

* *Dublin Review*, June, 1853.

‘ebrieties,’ ‘comessations,’ ‘longanimity,’ all which occur in that passage? while our Version has for ‘impudicity’ ‘wantonness,’ for ‘ebrieties’ ‘drunkenness,’ for ‘comessations’ ‘revellings,’ for ‘longanimity’ ‘longsuffering.’ Or set over against one another such phrases as these, in the Douay, ‘the exemplars of the celestials’ (Heb. ix. 23), but in ours, ‘the patterns of things in the heavens.’ Or suppose if instead of the words which *we* read at Heb. xiii. 16, namely, “to do good and to communicate forget not; for with such sacrifices God is well pleased,” we read as follows, which are the words of the Douay, “Beneficence and communication do not forget; for with such hosts God is promerited”—who does not feel how great and enduring our loss would have been, how it would have searched into the whole religious life of our people, if the translation used by them had been composed in such Latin-English as this?

There was indeed something still deeper than love of sound and genuine English at work in our translators, whether they were conscious of it, or no, which hindered them from sending the Scriptures to their fellow-countrymen dressed out in a semi-Latin garb. The Reformation, which they were in this translation so mightily strengthening and confirming, was just a throwing off, on the part of the Teutonic nations, of that everlasting pupilage in which Rome would have held them; an assertion at length that they were come to full age, and that not through her, but directly through Christ, they would address themselves unto God. The use of

the Latin language as the language of worship, as the language in which the Scriptures might alone be read, had been the great badge of servitude, even as the Latin habits of thought and feeling which it promoted had been the great helps to the continuance of this servitude, through long ages. It lay deep then in the very nature of their cause that the Reformers should develop the Saxon, or essentially national, element in the language ; while it was just as natural that the Douay translators, if they must translate the Scriptures into English at all, should yet translate them into such English as should bear the nearest possible resemblance to the Latin Vulgate, which Rome with a very deep wisdom of this world would gladly have seen as the only one in the hands of the faithful.

Let me again, however, recur to the fact that what our Reformers did in this matter they did without exaggeration ; even as they had shewn the same wise moderation in higher matters. They gave to the Latin side of the language its rights, though they would not suffer it to encroach upon and usurp those of the Teutonic part of the language. It would be difficult not to believe, even if all outward signs said not the same thing, that there are great things in store for the one language of Europe which is thus the connecting link between the North and the South ; between the languages spoken by the Teutonic nations of the North and by the Romance nations of the South ;—which holds on to both, which partakes of both ; which is as a middle term between both. It has been often

thought that the English Church, being in like manner double-fronted, looking on the one side toward Rome, being herself truly Catholic, looking on the other toward the Protestant communions, being herself also protesting and reformed, may yet have a great part in the Providence of God to play for the reconciling of a divided Christendom. And if this ever should be so, if, in spite of our sins and unworthiness, so blessed a task should be in store for us, it will not be a small help and assistance thereunto, that the language in which her mediation will have to be effected is one wherein both parties may claim their own, in which neither will feel that it is receiving the adjudication of a stranger, of one who must be an alien from its deeper thoughts and habits, because an alien from its words, but a language in which both recognize very much of that which is deepest and most precious of their own.

Nor is this merit which I have just claimed for our English the mere dream and fancy of patriotic vanity. The scholar who in our days is most profoundly acquainted with the great group of the Gothic languages in Europe, and a passionate lover, if ever there was such, of his native German, I mean Jacob Grimm, has expressed himself very nearly to the same effect, has given the palm over all to our English in words which you will not grudge to hear quoted, and with which I shall bring this lecture to a close. After ascribing to it "a veritable power of expression, such as perhaps never stood at the command of any other language

of men," he goes on to say, "Its highly spiritual genius, and wonderfully happy development and condition, have been the result of a surprisingly intimate union of the two noblest languages in modern Europe, the Teutonic and the Romance.—It is well known in what relation these two stand to one another in the English tongue; the former supplying in far larger proportion the material groundwork, the latter the spiritual conceptions. In truth the English language, which by no mere accident has produced and upborne the greatest and most predominant poet of modern times, as distinguished from the ancient classical poetry (I can, of course, only mean Shakespeare), may with all right be called a world-language; and like the English people appears destined hereafter to prevail with a sway more extensive even than its present over all the portions of the globe. For in wealth, good sense, and closeness of structure no other of the languages at this day spoken deserves to be compared with it—not even our German, which is torn, even as we are torn, and must first shake off many defects, before it can enter boldly into competition with the English.*

* *Ueber den Ursprung der Sprache*, Berlin, 1851, p. 135.

LECTURE II.

GAINS OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE.

IT is not for nothing that we speak of some languages as living, of others as dead. These epithets are not severally mere synonyms for 'spoken' and 'unspoken,' however we very often esteem them no more. Some languages are living, or alive, in quite a different and in a much higher sense than this ; showing themselves to be so by many infallible proofs, by motion, growth, acquisition, loss, progress, and decay. A living language is one in which a vital formative energy is still at work ; a dead language is one in which this has ceased. A living language is one which is in the course of actual evolution ; which is appropriating and assimilating to itself what it anywhere finds congenial to its own life, multiplying its resources, increasing its wealth ; which at the same time is casting off useless and cumbersome forms, dismissing from its vocabulary words of which it finds no use, rejecting from itself by a re-active energy the foreign and heterogeneous, which may for a while have been forced upon it. I would not assert that in the process of all this it does not make mistakes ; in the desire to simplify it may let go distinctions which were not useless, and which it would have been better to retain ; its acquisitions

are not all gains ; it sometimes rejects words as worthless, or suffers words to die out, which were most worthy to have lived. So far as it does this its life is an unhealthy one ; there are here signs of decay and death beginning ; but still it lives, and even these misgrowths and misformations are themselves the utterances and evidences of life. A dead language, the Latin for instance, is as incapable of losing as it is of gaining. We may know it better ; but it can never be more nor less in itself than it has been for hundreds of years.

Our own language is of course a living language still ; it is therefore gaining and losing ; it is a tree in which the vital sap is yet working, ascending from its roots into its branches ; and as this works, new leaves are being put forth by it, old are dropping away and dying. I propose for the subject of my present lecture to consider some of the evidences of this its present life. As I took for the subject of my first lecture the actual proportions in which the several elements of our composite English are now found in it, so I shall take for the subject of this, the *sources* from which the English language has enriched its vocabulary, the *periods* at which it has made its chief additions, the *character* of the additions which at different periods it has made, and the *motives* which induced it to seek them.

I had occasion to mention in that lecture, and indeed I dwelt for some time on the fact, that the core, the radical constitution of our language, is Anglo-Saxon ; so that, composite or mingled as it must freely be allowed to be, it is only such in re-

spect of its words, not in respect of its construction, inflexions, or generally its grammatical forms. These are all of one piece; and whatever of new has come in has been compelled to conform itself to these. The framework is English; only a part of the filling in is otherwise; and of this filling in, of these its comparatively more recent accessions, I now propose to speak.

The first great augmentation by foreign words of our vocabulary was a consequence, although not an immediate one, of the battle of Hastings, and of the Norman domination which Duke William's victory established in our land. And here let me say in respect of that victory, in contradiction to the sentimental regrets of Thierry and others, and with the fullest acknowledgment of the present miseries which it entailed on the Saxon race, that it was really the making of England. God never showed more plainly that He had great things in store for the people which should occupy this English soil, than when he brought that aspiring Norman race among us. At the same time the actual interpenetration of our Anglo-Saxon with any large amount of French words did not find place till very considerably later than this event, however it was a consequence of it. Some French words we find very soon after; but in the main the two streams of language continued for a long while separate and apart, even as the two nations remained aloof, a conquering and a conquered, and neither forgetting the fact.

Time however softened the mutual antipathies.

The Norman, shut out from France, began more and more to feel that England was his home and sphere. The Saxon, recovering little by little from the extreme depression which had ensued on his defeat,* became every day a more important element of the new English nation which was gradually forming from the coalition of the two races. His language partook of his elevation. It was no longer the badge of inferiority. French was no longer the only language in which a gentleman could speak, or in which a poet could sing. At the same time the Saxon, now passing into the English language, required a vast addition to its vocabulary, if it were to serve all the needs of

* We may trace, I think, a permanent record of this depression in the fact that a vast number of Teutonic words, which have a noble and august sense in the kindred language of Germany, and evidently had once such in the Anglo-Saxon, have forfeited this in whole or in part, have been contented to take a lower place, while, in most instances, a word of the Latin moiety of the language has assumed the place which they have vacated. Thus 'tapfer' is valiant, courageous, but 'dapper' is only spruce or smart; 'prachtig' which means proud, magnificent, has dwindled into 'pretty'; 'taufen' being to baptize, only appears with us as 'to dip'; 'weinen' is honest weeping in German, it is only 'whining' with us; 'dach' is any roof whatever, but 'thatch' is only a straw roof for us; 'baum' is a living tree, while 'beam' is only a piece of dead timber; in 'horn-beam,' one of our trees, 'beam' still keeps its earlier use. 'Haut' is skin, but its English representative is 'hide,' skin, that is, of a beast. 'Stuhl,' a seat or chair, is degraded into 'stool;' while 'graben' is no longer to dig, but only 'to grub.' And this list might be very largely increased.

those who were willing to employ it now. How much was there of high culture, how many of the arts of life, of its refined pleasures, which had been strange to Saxon men, and had therefore found no utterance in Saxon words. All this it was sought to supply from the French.

I consider the great period of the incoming of French words into the English language to have been when the Norman nobility were exchanging their own language for the English; and I should be disposed with Tyrwhitt to believe that there is much exaggeration in attributing the great influx of these into English to one man's influence, namely to Chaucer's.* Doubtless he did much; he fell in with, and furthered a tendency already existing. But to suppose that the greater number of French vocables which he employed in his poems had never been employed before, had been hitherto unfamiliar to English ears, is to suppose that his poems must have presented to his contemporaries an absurd patchwork of two languages, and leaves it impossible to explain how he should at once have become the popular poet of our nation.

That Chaucer largely developed the language in

* Thus Alexander Gil, head-master of St. Paul's school, in his book, *Logonomia Anglica*, 1621, *Preface*: Huc usque peregrinæ voces in linguâ Anglicâ inauditæ. Tandem circa annum 1400 Galfridus Chaucerus, infausto omine, vocabulis Gallicis et Latinis poësin suam famosam reddidit. The whole passage, which is too long to quote, as indeed the whole book, is curious. Gil was an earnest advocate of phonetic spelling, and has adopted it in all his English quotations in this book.

this direction is indeed plain. We have only to compare his English with that of another great master of the tongue, his cotemporary Wiclif, to perceive how much more his diction is saturated with French words than is that of the Reformer. We may note too that a great many which he and others employed, and as it were proposed for admission, were not finally allowed and received, so that no doubt they were here in excess.* At the same time this can be regarded as no condemnation of their attempt; it was only by actual experience that it could be proved whether the language wanted those words or not, whether it could absorb them into itself, and assimilate them with all that it already was and had; or did not require, and would therefore in due time reject and put them away. And the same will happen in every attempt to transplant on a large scale the words of one language into another. Some will take root; others will not, but after a longer or briefer period will wither and die. Thus I observe in Chaucer such French words as these, ‘misericorde,’ ‘malure’ (malheur), ‘penible,’ ‘gipon,’ ‘pierrie’ for ‘pre-

* We may observe exactly the same in Plautus; a multitude of Greek words are used by him, which the Latin language did not want, and therefore refused to take up; thus ‘clepta,’ ‘danista,’ ‘harpagare,’ ‘nauclerus,’ ‘strategus,’ ‘morologus,’ ‘malacus,’ ‘sycophantia’ [so ‘scymnus’ by Lucretius], none of which, I believe, are employed except by him; yet only experience could show that they were superfluous; and at the epoch of Latin literature in which he lived it was well done to put them on trial.

cious stones;’ none of which have been permanently incorporated in our tongue. As little has ‘creansur,’ which Wiclif (2 Kin. 4. 1) employs for creditor, held its place. It is curious to mark other of these French adoptions keeping their ground to a very much later day, and yet finally extruded from the language: seeming to have taken firm root, they have yet withered away in the end. Thus has it been for example with ‘rivage,’ ‘jouissance,’ ‘accoil’ (accueillir), ‘sell’ (= saddle), all occurring in Spenser; with ‘esperance,’ ‘orgillous’ (= orgueilleux), ‘rondeur,’ in Shakespeare. ‘Maugre,’ ‘congie,’ ‘mot,’ ‘devoir,’ were English once; when we employ them now, it is with the sense that we are using foreign words. The same is true of ‘dulce,’ ‘aigredoulce’ (= soursweet), of ‘mur’ for wall, of the verb ‘to cass’ (all in Holland), of ‘volupty’ (Sir T. Elyot), ‘volunt’y’ (Evelyn), ‘medisance’ (Montagu), ‘petit’ (South), ‘eloign’ (Hacket), this last surviving still in the beautiful, now only provincial word, though formerly employed by Chaucer, ‘ellinge,’ that is, lonely, melancholy, separated from friends.*

We have seen when the great influx of French words took place—that is, from the time of the Conquest, although scantily and feebly at the first, to that of Chaucer. With him our literature and

* Let me here observe once for all that in adding the name of an author, which I shall often do, to a word, I do not mean to affirm that the word is in any way peculiar to him; although in some cases it may be so; but only that he is one authority for its use.

language had made a burst, which they were not able to maintain. He was as some warm bright day in the very early spring, which seems to say that the winter is over and gone; the promise of which, however, is deceitful; the full bursting and blossoming of the spring-time are yet far off. That struggle with France which began so gloriously, but ended so disastrously, even with the loss of our whole ill-won dominion there, the savagery of our wars of the Roses, wars which were a legacy bequeathed to us by that unrighteous conquest, leave a great blank in our literary history, nearly a century during which very little was done for the cultivation of our native tongue, during which it could have made few important accessions to its wealth. Lydgate is the most important name in this period; but Warton's judgment about him is certainly too favorable.

A time however was coming when we were about to receive largely from the Latin, and this by way of direct importation from it, and not as before, Latin words, which were French before they were English, and only as French reached us. The revival of learning, the period of a familiar re-acquaintance with the great master-pieces of ancient literature, was naturally the period when this would be. This revival of learning, which found place somewhat earlier in Italy, where it had its birth, than with us, extended to England and was operative here during the reigns of Henry the Eighth and his immediate successors. During this period, Latin words came into the language not by single adoption, as with later writers, but in floods.

Thus Puttenham, a writer of Queen Elizabeth's reign, who in 1589 published an *Art of English Poetry*, gives a long list of words which he states to have been of quite recent introduction into the language. Some of them are Greek, a few French and Italian, but very far the most are Latin. I will not give you his whole catalogue, but some specimens from it; it is difficult to understand in regard of some of these how the language should have managed to do without them so long; 'method,' 'methodical,' 'function,' 'numerous,' 'penetrate,' 'penetrable,' 'indignity,' 'savage,' 'scientific,' 'delineation,' 'dimension'—all which he notes to have recently come up; so too 'idiom,' 'significative,' 'compendious,' 'prolix,' 'figurative,' 'inveigle,' 'metrical.' All these he adduces with praise; others upon which he bestows equal commendation have not held their ground, as 'placation,' 'numerosity,' 'harmonical.' Of those novelties which he disallowed, in some cases, as in the words, 'facundity,' 'implete,' 'attemptat' ('attentat'), he only anticipated the decision of a later day; while others which he disallowed no less, as 'audacious,' 'compatible,' 'egregious,' have maintained their ground. These too have done the same; 'despicable,' 'destruction,' 'homicide,' 'obsequious,' 'ponderous,' 'portentous,' 'prodigious,' all which another writer a little earlier condemns as "ink-horn terms, smelling too much of the Latin."

It is curious to observe the "words of art" as he calls them, which Philemon Holland, a voluminous translator at the end of the sixteenth and beginning

of the seventeenth century, counts it needful to explain in a sort of glossary which he prefixes to his translation of Pliny's *Natural History*,* 1601. One can hardly at the present day understand how any person who would care to read the book at all would find any difficulty with words like the following, 'acrimony,' 'austere,' 'bulb,' 'consolidate,' 'debility,' 'dose,' 'ingredient,' 'opiate,' 'propitious,' 'symptom,' all which as novelties he carefully explains. Some of the words in his glossary, it is true, are harder and more technical than these ; but the vast proportion of them present no more difficulty than those which I have adduced.†

* Besides this work he translated the whole of Plutarch's *Moralia*, Livy, Suetonius, Ammianus Marcellinus, and possibly other classical authors. His works make a part of the library of dullness in Pope's *Dunciad* :

"De Lyra there a dreadful front extends,
And here the groaning shelves *Philemon* bends."

But his books are a mine of genuine idiomatic English, neglected by most of our lexicographers, wrought to a considerable extent and with great advantage by Richardson ; yet capable, as it seems to me, of yielding much more in illustration of the language than they yet have yielded.

† And so too in French it is surprising to find of how late introduction are many words, which it seems as if the language could never have done without. 'Désintéressement,' 'exactitude,' 'sagacité,' 'bravoure,' were not introduced till late in the seventeenth century. 'Renaissance,' 'emportement,' 'désagrément' were all recent in 1675 (Bouhours) ; 'indérot,' 'intolérance,' 'impardonnable,' 'irréligieux' were struggling into allowance at the end of the seventeenth century, and were not established till the beginning of the eighteenth ; 'insidieux' was invented by Malherbe ; 'frivolité' does not appear

The period during which this naturalization of Latin words in the English language was going actively forward, may be said to have continued for about a century or more. It first received a check from the coming up of French tastes, fashions, and habits of thought with the Restoration of Charles the Second. The writers already formed before that period, such as Cudworth and Barrow, still continued to write their stately sentences, Latin in structure, and Latin in diction, but not so those of a younger generation. We may say of this influx of Latin that it left the language immensely increased in copiousness, with greatly enlarged capabilities, but perhaps somewhat burdened, and not always able to move gracefully under the weight of its new acquisitions; for as

in the earlier editions of the *Dictionary of the Academy*. The Abbé de St. Pierre was the first to employ 'bienfaisance,' the elder Balzac 'féliciter,' Sarrasin 'burlesque.' Mad. de Sevigné cries out against her daughter for employing 'effervescence' in a letter. (Comment dites-vous cela, ma fille? Voilà un mot dont je n'avais jamais ouï parler). 'Demagogue' was first hazarded by Bossuet, and was counted so bold that it was long before any ventured to follow him in its use. Somewhat earlier Montaigne had introduced 'diversion,' and 'enfantillage,' though not without being rebuked by cotemporaries on the score of the last. 'Convertisseur' was born of those hateful efforts to convert the French Protestants at so much a head; one who undertook this on a large scale being so called. Caron gave to the language 'avant-propos,' Ronsard 'avidité,' Joachim Dubellay 'patrie,' Denis Sauvage 'jurisconsulte,' and Etienne first brought in, apologising at the same time for the boldness of it, 'analogie.' (Si les oreilles françoises peuvent porter ce mot).

Dryden has somewhere truly said, it is easy enough to acquire foreign words, but to know what to do with them after you have acquired, is the difficulty. It might have received indeed most serious injury, if *all* the words which the great writers of this the Latin period of our language employed, and so proposed as candidates for admission into it, had received the stamp of popular allowance.

But happily it was not so ; it was here, as it had been before with the French importations ; the re-active powers of the language, enabling it to throw off that which was foreign to it, did not fail to display themselves now, as they had done then. The number of unsuccessful candidates for admission into, and permanent naturalization in, the language during this period, is enormous ; and one must say that in almost all instances where the alien act has been enforced, the sentence of exclusion was a just one ; it was such as the circumstances of the case abundantly bore out. Either the words were not idiomatic, or were not intelligible, or were not needed, or looked ill, or sounded ill, or some other valid reason existed against them. A lover of his native tongue will tremble to think what that tongue would have become, if all the vocables from the Latin and the Greek which were then introduced or endorsed by illustrious names, had been admitted on the strength of their recommendation ; if ‘torve’ and ‘tetric’ (Fuller), ‘cecity’ (Hooker), ‘lepid’ and ‘sufflamine’ (Barrow), ‘stultiloquy,’ ‘immorigerous,’ ‘clancular,’ ‘ferity,’ ‘hyperaspist’ (all in Jeremy Taylor), if ‘dyscolous’ (Foxe),

‘moliminously’ (Cudworth), ‘immarcescible’ (Bishop Hall), ‘arride’ (ridiculed by Ben Jonson), with the hundreds of other words like these, and even more monstrous than some of these, not to speak of such Italian as ‘leggiadrous’ (Beaumont, *Psyche*), had not been rejected and disallowed by the true instinct of the national mind.

A great many too *were* allowed and adopted, but not exactly in the shape in which they first were introduced among us; they were made to drop their foreign termination, or otherwise their foreign appearance, to conform themselves to English ways, and only so were finally incorporated into the great family of English words.* Thus ‘pantomimi’ (Lord Bacon) soon became ‘pantomimes;’ ‘atomi’ (Lord Brooke) ‘atoms;’ ‘epocha’ (Dryden, and used as late as South) became ‘epoch;’ ‘caricatura’ (Sir T. Browne) ‘caricature;’ ‘effigies’ and ‘statua’ (both in Shakespeare) ‘effigy’ and ‘statue;’ not otherwise ‘pyramis’ and ‘pyramides,’ which also are forms employed by him, became ‘pyramid’ and ‘pyramids;’ ‘colone’ (Burton) ‘clown;’ ‘apostata’ (Massinger) became ‘apostate;’ ‘despota’ (Foxy) ‘despot;’ ‘mummia’ (Webster) ‘mummy;’ ‘synonyma’ (Milton, prose) ‘synonyms;’ ‘galaxias’ (Foxy) ‘galaxy;’ and ‘heros’ (H. More) ‘hero.’ Nor can that slight but widely extended change of ‘innocency,’ ‘indolency,’ ‘tem-

* J. Grimm (*Wörterbuch*, p. xxvi.): Fällt von ungefähr ein fremdes wort in den brunnen einer sprache, so wird es so lange darin umgetrieben, bis es ihre farbe annimmt, und seiner fremden art zum trotze wie ein heimisches aussieht.

perancy,' and the large family of words with similar termination, into 'innocence,' 'indolence,' 'temperance' and the like, be regarded otherwise than as part of the same process. The same has gone on with words from other languages, as from the Italian and the Spanish; thus 'banditto' (Shakespeare) becomes 'bandit;' 'princessa' (Hacket) 'princess;' 'scaramucha' (Dryden) 'scaramouch;' 'caprichio' becomes first 'caprich' (Butler), then 'caprice;' 'ambuscado,' 'barricado,' 'renegado,' 'hurricano' (all in Shakespeare), 'brocado' (Hackluyt), drop their foreign terminations, and severally become 'ambuscade,' 'barricade,' 'renegade,' 'hurricane,' 'brocade.' Other slight modifications of spelling, not in the termination, but in the body of a word, will indicate in like manner its more entire incorporation into the English language. Thus 'restoration' was at first spelt 'restauration;' and so long as 'vicinage' was spelt 'voisinage,' as by Bishop Sanderson, or 'mirror' 'miroir,' as by Fuller, they could scarcely be said to be those purely English words which now they are.

Here and there even at this late period of the language awkward foreign words will be recast throughout into a more English mould; 'chirurgion' will become 'surgeon;' 'squincancy' will become first 'squinzey' (J. Taylor), and then 'quinsey;' 'porkpisce' (Spenser), that is 'sea-hog,' or 'hog-fish,' will be 'porpesse,' and then 'porpoise,' as it is now. In other words the attempt will be made, but it will be now too late to be attended with success. 'Physiognomy' will not give place to 'vis-

nomy,' even though Spenser and Shakespeare employ this briefer form ; nor 'hippopotamus' to 'hippodame,' even at Spenser's bidding. In like manner the attempt to naturalize 'avant-courier' in the shape of 'vancurrier' has failed.

Looking at this process of the reception of foreign words, and afterwards their assimilation to our own, and the great number of words in which this work has been accomplished, we may trace, I think, as was to be expected, a certain conformity between the genius of our institutions and that of our language. As it is the very character of our institutions to repel none, but rather to afford a shelter and a refuge to all, from whatever quarter they come, and after a while longer or shorter all these strangers and incomers have been incorporated into the English nation, within one or two generations have forgotten that they were ever any other than members of it, retaining no other reminiscence of their foreign extraction than some slight difference of name, and that often disappearing or having disappeared, exactly so has it been with the English language. None has been less exclusive ; none has stood less upon niceties ; none has thrown open its arms wider, with a greater confidence, a confidence justified by experience, that it could make truly its own, assimilate and subdue to itself, whatever it thought good to receive into its bosom.

These are the two great enlargements from without of our vocabulary. All other are minor and subordinate. Thus that introduction of French tastes by Charles the Second and his courtiers re-

turning from exile, to which I have just adverted, though it rather modified the structure of our sentences than the elements of our vocabulary, gave us some new words. In one of Dryden's plays, *Marriage à la Mode*, a lady full of affectation is introduced, who is always employing French idioms in preference to English, French words rather than native. It is not a little curious that of these which are thus put into her mouth to render her ridiculous not a few are now excellent English, and have nothing far sought or affected about them—so often does it prove that what is laughed at in the beginning, is by all admitted and allowed at the last. For example, to speak of a person being in the 'good graces' of another has nothing in it ridiculous now; nor yet have the words 'repartee,' 'embarrass,' 'chagrin,' 'grimace;' which all must plainly have been both novel and affected at the time when Dryden wrote. 'Fougue' and 'fraisheur,' which he himself employed—who, it is true, was not a frequent offender in this way—have not been justified by the same success.

Nor can it be said that this adoption and naturalization of foreign words ever ceases in a language. There are periods, as we have seen, when this goes forward much more largely than at others; when a language throws open, as it were, its doors, and welcomes strangers with an especial freedom; but there is never a time, when one by one these foreigners and strangers are not stepping into it. We do not for the most part observe the fact, at least not while it is actually doing. The

great innovator Time manages his innovations so dexterously, spreads them over such vast periods, and therefore brings them about so gradually, that often, while effecting the mightiest changes, he seems to us to be effecting none at all.

It is indeed well nigh impossible to conceive anything more gradual than the steps by which a foreign word is admitted into the full rights of an English one ; and thus the process of its incoming often eludes our notice altogether. It appears to me that we may best understand this, by fixing our attention upon some single word, which at this very moment is in the course of becoming English. I know no better example than the French word 'prestige' will afford. 'Prestige' manifestly supplies a want in our tongue; it expresses something which no single word in English could express; which could only be expressed by a long circumlocution; being that moral influence which past successes, as the pledge and promise of future ones, breed. The word has thus naturally come to be of very frequent use by good English writers; for they do not feel that in employing it, they are deserting as good or a better word of their own. At first all used it avowedly as French, writing it in italics to indicate this. At the present moment some writers do so still, some do not; that is, some regard it still as French, others consider that it has now become English, and obtained an English settlement.* Gradually the number of those who

* We may see something of the same process in Greek words which were being incorporated in the Latin. Thus

write it in italics will become fewer and fewer, till they cease altogether. It will then only need that the accent should be shifted, in obedience to the tendencies of the English language, from the second syllable to the first, and that instead of 'prestíge' it should be pronounced 'préstige,' and its naturalization will be complete. I have little doubt that in twenty years it will be so pronounced by the great body of well educated Englishmen, and that our present pronunciation will pass away in the same manner as 'obleege,' once universal, has past away, and given place to 'oblige.'*

Let me here observe in passing that the process of throwing the accent of a word back, by way of completing the naturalization of it, is one which we may note constantly going forward in our language. Thus while Chaucer accentuates sometimes 'natúre,' he also accentuates elsewhere 'náture,' while sometimes 'virtúe' at other times 'virtue;' 'éssay' was 'essáy' with Dryden; he closes a heroic line with the word, as Pope does with 'barrier,' therefore pronounced 'barriér' by him.

Greek and Latin words also we still continue to

Cicero writes *ἀντίποδες* (*Acad.* ii. 39, 123), but Seneca (*Ep.* 122), 'antipodes.' The word for Cicero was still Greek, while in the period that elapsed between him and Seneca, it had become Latin. Exactly in the same way 'criterion' was so little felt to be an English word in the time of Jeremy Taylor, that he writes it *κρίτήριον*. I think also that he writes not 'acme,' but *ἀκμή*.

* See in Coleridge's *Table Talk*, p. 3, the story of John Kemble's stately correction of the Prince of Wales for adhering to the earlier pronunciation 'obleege'—"It will become your royal mouth better to say oblige."

adopt, although now not any longer in masses, but only one by one. With the lively interest which always has been felt in classical studies among us, and which will continue to be felt, so long as any greatness and nobleness survive in our land, it must needs be that accessions from these quarters would never cease altogether. I do not refer here to purely scientific terms; these, so long as they continue such, and do not pass over the threshold of the science or sciences for the use of which they were invented, being never heard on the lips, or employed in the writings, of any others but the cultivators of these sciences, have no right to be properly called words at all. They are a kind of shorthand of the science, or algebraic notation; and will not find place in a rightly constituted dictionary of the language, but rather in a technical dictionary apart by themselves. Of these, compelled by the advances of physical science, we have coined multitudes out of number in these later times, fashioning them mainly from the Greek, no other language within our reach yielding itself at all so easily to our needs.

Of non-scientific words, both Greek and Latin, some have made their way among us quite in these latter times. To speak first of Greek, Burke attempted the verb 'to spheterize,' that is, to appropriate, or make one's own; but this without success. Others have been more fortunate; 'æsthetic' we have got indeed *through* the Germans, but *from* the Greeks. Tennyson has given allowance to 'æon;' and 'myth' is a deposit which vast

and far-reaching controversies have left in the popular language. 'Photography' is an example of what I was just now speaking of—namely, a scientific word which has travelled beyond the limits of the science which it designates, and which gave it birth; being heard on the lips of others besides photographers, and therefore having a right to be considered as making part of the language.

More numerous are the Latin. 'Solidarity,' a word which we owe to the French communists, and which signifies a community in gain and loss, in honour and dishonour, a being, so to speak, all in the same bottom, is so convenient that it will be vain to struggle against its reception. The newspapers already have it, and books will not long exclude it; not to say that it has found place in German, and probably in other European languages as well. Ruskin has given to 'ornamentation' the sanction and authority of his name. Not quite so new, but of quite recent introduction into the language, are 'normal,' 'abnormal.'

When we consider the near affinity between the English and German languages, which, if not sisters, may at least be regarded as first cousins, it is somewhat remarkable that almost since the day when they parted company, each to fulfil its own destiny, there has been little or no further commerce between them in the matter of giving or taking, that is, until within the last fifty years. At any rate adoptions on our part from the German have been till within this period almost none. Of

late however they have been somewhat more frequent. With several of the German compound words we have been in recent times so well pleased, that we must needs adopt them into, or imitate them in, English. We have not always been very happy in those which we have selected for imitation or adoption. Thus we might have been satisfied with 'manual,' and not put together that very ugly and very unnecessary word 'handbook,' which is scarcely, I should suppose, ten or fifteen years old. 'Einseitig' (itself a modern word, if I mistake not) has not, indeed, been adopted, but is evidently the pattern on which we have formed 'one-sided'—a word to which a few years ago something of affectation was attached; and any one who employed it at once gave evidence that he was more or less a dealer in German wares; it has however its manifest conveniences, and will hold its ground. 'Fatherland' (Vaterland) on the contrary will scarcely establish itself among us, the note of affectation will continue to cleave to it, and we shall go on contented with 'native country' to the end. The most successful of these compounded words, borrowed recently from the German, is 'folklore,' and the substitution of this for the long and Latinized, 'popular superstitions,' must be esteemed, I think, to be an unquestionable gain.

To speak now of other sources from which the new words of a language are derived. Of course the period when absolutely new roots are generated will have past away, long before men begin to take any notice by a reflective act of pro-

cesses going forward in the language which they speak. This pure productive, or creative energy, as we might call it, belongs only to the earliest periods of a nation's existence,—to periods quite out of the ken of history. It is only from materials already existing either in its own bosom, or in the bosom of other languages, that it can enrich itself in the later, or historical stages of its life.

And first, it can bring its own words into new combinations; it can join two, and sometimes even more than two, of the words which it already has, and form out of them a new one. It need hardly be observed that much more is wanted here than merely to unite two or more words to one another by a hyphen; this is not to make a new word: they must really coalesce and grow together. Different languages possess this power of forming new words by the combination of old in very different degrees, and even the same language at different periods of its existence. The eminent felicity of the Greek in this respect has been always acknowledged. "The joints of her compounded words," says Fuller, "are so naturally oiled, that they run nimbly on the tongue, which makes them though long, never tedious, because significant."*

* *Holy State*, b. 2, c. 6. There was a time when the Latin promised to display, if not an equal, yet not a very inferior, freedom in this forming of new words by the happy marriage of old. But in this, as in so many respects, it seemed possessed at the period of its highest culture with a timidity which caused it voluntarily to abdicate many of its own powers. Where do we find in the Augustan period of

Sir Philip Sydney boasts of the capability of our English language in this respect—that “it is particularly happy in the composition of two or three words together, near equal to the Greek.” No one has done more than Milton to justify this praise, or to make manifest what may be effected by this marriage of words. Many of his compound epithets, as ‘golden-tressed,’ ‘tinsel-slippered,’ ‘coral-paven,’ ‘vermeil-tinctured,’ are themselves poems in miniature.

Our modern inventions in the same kind are for the most part very inferior: they could hardly fail to be so, seeing that the formative, plastic powers of a language are always waning and diminishing

the language so grand a pair of epithets as these, occurring as they do in a single line of Catullus: *Ubi cerva silvicultrix, ubi aper nemorivagus?* Nay, it did not even retain those compound epithets which it once had formed, but was content to let numbers of them drop: ‘*parcipromus*,’ ‘*turpiluericupidus*,’ and many more, do not extend beyond Plautus. On this matter Quintilian observes (1. 5. 70): *Res tota magis Græcos decet, nobis minus succedit; nec id fieri naturâ puto, sed alienis favemus; ideoque cum κυρταύχενα mirati sumus, incurvicervicum vix a risu defendimus.* Elsewhere he complains, though not with reference to compound epithets, of the little generative power which existed in the Latin language, that its continual losses were compensated by no equivalent gains (8. 6. 32): *Deinde, tanquam consummata sint omnia, nihil generare audemus ipsi, quum multa quotidie ab antiquis ficta moriantur.* Notwithstanding this complaint, it must be owned that the silver age of the language, which sought to recover, and did recover to some extent the abdicated energies of its earlier times, re-asserted among other powers that of combining words, with a certain measure of success.

more and more. It may be, and indeed is, gaining in other respects, but in this it is losing ; and thus it is not strange if its later births in this kind are less successful than its earlier. Among the poets of our own time Shelley has done more than any other to assert for the language that it has not renounced this power ; while among writers of prose in these later days Jeremy Bentham has been at once one of the boldest, but at the same time one of the most unfortunate, of those who have issued this money from their mint. Still we ought not to forget, while we divert ourselves with the strange amorphous progeny of his brain, that we owe ‘international’ to him—a word at once so convenient and supplying so real a need, that it was and with manifest advantage at once adopted by all.

Another way in which languages increase their stock of vocables is by the forming of new words according to the analogy of formations, which in seemingly parallel cases have been already allowed. Thus long since upon certain substantives such as ‘nation,’ ‘congregation,’ ‘convention,’ were formed their adjectives, ‘national,’ ‘congregational,’ ‘conventional ;’ yet these also at a comparatively modern period ; ‘congregational’ and ‘national’ first rising up in the Assembly of Divines, that is, during the time of the Commonwealth.* These having found admission into the language, it is attempted to repeat the process in the case of other words with

* *Collection of Scarce Tracts*, Edited by Sir W. Scott, vol. vii. p. 91.

the same ending.* I confess the effect is often exceedingly disagreeable. We are now pretty well used to 'educational,' and the word is sometimes serviceable enough; but I can perfectly remember when some eighteen years ago an '*Educational Magazine*' was started, the first impression on one's mind was, that a work having to do with education should not thus bear upon its front an offensive, or to say the best, a very dubious novelty in the English language. These adjectives are now multiplying fast. We have 'inflexional,' 'denominational,' and not content with this, in dissenting magazines at least, the monstrous birth, 'denominationalism;' 'emotional' too is creeping into books, though as yet I have but seen it in an American, and I dare say others as well; so that it is hard to say where this influx will stop, or whether all our words with this termination will not finally bring forth an adjective. Convenient as you may sometimes find these, I would yet certainly counsel you to abstain from all but the perfectly well recognized formations of this kind. It is prudent to follow here, rather than to lead.

'Starvation' is another word of quite recent

* A parallel to this is the formation in the later Latin of Tertullian, Prudentius, and others, of a multitude of substantives in 'men' and 'amen,' according to the analogy of the very few, three or four, 'certamen,' 'cantamen,' 'irritamen,' 'fragmen,' which already existed at its best times in the language. At a later day their number becomes legion; 'figmen,' 'putamen,' 'peccamen,' 'spurcamen,' 'speculamen,' 'cruciamen,' 'litamen,' are only a few.

introduction, formed in like manner on the model of preceding formations of a similar character—its first formers indeed not observing that they were putting a Latin termination to a Saxon word. The word is an Americanism. “Strange as it may appear,” observes a writer in the *Notes and Queries*, “it is nevertheless quite true that this word, now unhappily so common on every tongue, is not to be found in *our own* English Dictionaries; neither in Todd’s *Johnson*, published in 1826, nor in Richardson’s, published ten years later, nor in Smart’s *Walker Remodelled*, published about the same time as Richardson’s. It is Webster, who has the credit of importing it from his country into *this*, and in a supplement issued a few years ago Mr. Smart adopted it as ‘*a trivial word, but in very common and at present good use.*’”

Again, languages enrich themselves, our own has done so, by recovering treasures which for a while had been lost by them or foregone. I do not mean that all which drops out of use is loss; there are words which it is gain to be rid of; which it would be folly to wish to revive; of which Dryden, setting himself against an extravagant zeal in this direction, says in an ungracious comparison—they do “not deserve this redemption, any more than the crowds of men who daily die, or are slain for sixpence in a battle, merit to be restored to life, if a wish could revive them.”* There are others however which it is a real gain to draw back again from the temporary oblivion which had overtaken them; and

* Postscript to his translation of the *Æneid*.

this process of their setting and rising again is not as unfrequent as at first might seem.

You may perhaps remember that Horace, tracing in a few memorable lines the history of words, while he notes that many which were once current have now dropped out of use, does not thereby count that of necessity their race is for ever run; on the contrary he confidently anticipates a palinogenesy for many among them: "Multa renascuntur, quæ jam cecidere;" and I am convinced that there has been such in the case of our English words to a far greater extent than we are generally aware. Words slip almost or quite as imperceptibly back into use as they once slipped out of it. Let me suggest a few facts in evidence of this. In the cotemporary gloss which an anonymous friend of Spenser's furnished to his *Shepherds Calendar*, "for the exposition of old words," as he declares, he thinks it expedient to include in his list, such as the following: 'dapper,' 'scathe,' 'askance,' 'sere,' 'embellish,' 'bevy,' 'forestall,' 'fain,' with not a few others quite as familiar as these. Who will say of the verb 'to hallow' that it is even obsolescent; and yet Wallis two hundred years ago observed—"it has almost gone out of use" (*fere desuevit*). It would be difficult to find an example of the verb 'to advocate' between Milton and Burke. Franklin, a close observer in such matters, as he was himself an admirable master of English style, considered the word to have sprung up during his own residence in Europe. In this indeed he was mistaken; it had only during this period revived.

Johnson says of 'jeopardy'—"it is not in use;" which certainly is not any longer true. I am persuaded that as far as intelligibility is concerned, Chaucer is not merely as near, but much nearer, to us than he was felt by Dryden and his contemporaries to be to them. He and the writers of his time make exactly the same sort of complaints, only in still stronger language, about his archaic phraseology and the obscurities which it involves that are made at the present day. Thus in the *Preface* to his *Tales from Chaucer* Dryden having quoted some not very difficult lines from the earlier poet whom he was modernizing, proceeds: "You have here a specimen of Chaucer's language, which is so obsolete that his sense is scarce to be understood."

Nor was it merely thus with respect of Chaucer. These wits and poets of the Court of Charles the Second were conscious of a greater gulf between themselves and the Elizabethian æra, separated from them by little more than fifty years, than any of which we are aware, separated from it by nearly two centuries more. I do not mean merely that they felt themselves more removed from its tone and spirit; their altered circumstances might explain this; but I am convinced that they found a greater difficulty and strangeness in the language of Spenser and Shakespeare than we find now; that it sounded in many ways more uncouth, more old-fashioned, more abounding in obsolete terms than it does in our ears at the present. Only in this way can I explain the tone in which they are

accustomed to speak of these worthies of the near past. I must again refer to Dryden, the truest representative of literary England in its good and in its evil during the last half of the seventeenth century. Of Spenser, whose death was separated from his own birth by little more than thirty years, he speaks as of one belonging to quite a different epoch, counting it much to say, "notwithstanding his obsolete language, he is still intelligible."* Nay, hear what his judgment is of Shakespeare himself, so far as language is concerned: "It must be allowed to the present age that the tongue in general is so much refined since Shakespeare's time, that many of his words and more of his phrases are scarce intelligible. And of those which we understand, some are ungrammatical, others coarse; and his whole style is so pestered with figurative expressions, that it is as affected as it is obscure."†

Sometimes a word will emerge anew from the undercurrent of society, not indeed new, but yet to most seeming as new, its very existence having been altogether forgotten by the greater number of those speaking the language; although it must have somewhere lived on upon the lips of men. Thus, for instance, since the Californian and Australian dis-

* *Preface to Juvenal.*

† *Preface to Troilus and Cressida.* In justice to Dryden, and lest it should be said that he had spoken poetic blasphemy, it ought not to be forgotten that 'pestered' had not in his time at all so offensive a sense as it would have now. It meant no more than inconveniently crowded; thus Milton: "Confined and *pestered* in this pinfold here."

coveries of gold we hear often of a 'nugget' of gold ; a lump, that is, of the pure metal ; and there has been some discussion whether the word has been born for the present necessity, or whether it be a recent malformation of 'ingot.' I am inclined to think that it is neither one nor the other. I would not indeed affirm that it may not be a popular recasting of 'ingot ;' but only that it is not a recent one ; for 'nugget' very nearly in its present form, occurs in our elder writers, being spelt 'niggot' by them.* There can be little doubt that this is the same word ; all the consonants, which are generally the *stamina* of a word, being the same ; while this early form 'niggot' makes more plausible their suggestion that 'nugget' is only 'ingot' disguised, seeing that there wants nothing but the very common metathesis of the two first letters to bring that out of this.

New words are often formed from the names of persons, actual or mythical. Some one has observed how interesting would be a complete collection, or a collection approaching to completeness, in any language of the names of persons which have afterwards become names of things, from *nomina appellativa* have become *nomina realia*. Let me without confining myself to those of more recent introduction endeavour to enumerate as many

* Thus in North's *Plutarch*, p. 499: "After the fire was quenched, they found in *niggots* of gold and silver mingled together, about a thousand talents;" and again, p. 323: "There was brought a marvellous great mass of treasure in *niggots* of gold."

as I can remember of the words which have by this method been introduced into our language. To begin with mythical antiquity—the Chimæra has given us ‘chimerical,’ Hermes ‘hermetic,’ Tantalus ‘to tantalize,’ Hercules ‘herculean,’ and Dædalus ‘dedal,’ if this word may on Spenser’s and Shelley’s authority be allowed. Gordius, a Phrygian king who tied that famous ‘gordian’ knot which Alexander cut, will supply a natural transition from mythical to historical. Here Mausolus, a king of Caria, has left us ‘mausoleum,’ Academus ‘academy,’ Epicurus ‘epicure,’ Philip of Macedon a ‘philippic,’ being such a discourse as Demosthenes once hurled against him, the enemy of Greece, and Cicero ‘cicerone;’ Mithridates, who had made himself poison-proof, gave us the now forgotten word, ‘mithridate,’ for antidote; as from Hippocrates we derived ‘hipocras,’ a word often occurring in our early poets, being a wine supposed to be mingled according to his receipt. A grammar used to be called a ‘donat’ or ‘donet’ (Chaucer) from Donatus, a famous grammarian. Lazarus, perhaps an actual person, has given us ‘lazar’ and ‘lazaretto;’ and Simon Magus ‘simony;’ Mahomet a ‘maumet’ or ‘mammet,’ that is, an idol; and ‘dunce’ is from Duns Scotus. To come to more modern times, and not pausing at Ben Jonson’s ‘Chaucerisms,’ Bishop Hall’s ‘Scoganisms’ from Scogan, Edward the Fourth’s jester, or his ‘aretinisms,’ from an infamous Italian named Aretine, these being probably not intended even by their authors to endure, a Roman cobbler named Pasquin has

given us the 'pasquil' or 'pasquinade;' Colonel Negus in Queen Anne's time first mixed the beverage which goes by his name; Lord Orrery was the first for whom an 'orrery' was made; and Lord Spencer first wore, or at least first brought into fashion, a 'spencer.' Dahl, a Swede, introduced the cultivation of the 'dahlia.' The 'tontine' was conceived by an Italian, Tonti; and another Italian, Galvani, first noted the phenomena of galvanism. 'Martinet,' 'mackintosh,' 'doyly,' 'to macadamize,' 'to burke,' are all names of persons or formed from persons, and then transferred to things, on the score of some connexion existing between the one and other.*

Again the names of popular characters in literature, such as have taken strong hold on the national mind, give birth to a number of new words. Thus from Homer we have 'mentor' for a monitor; 'stentorian' for loud-voiced; and inasmuch as with all of Hector's nobleness there is a certain amount

* Several of these we have in common with the French; of their own they have 'sardanapalisme,' any piece of profuse luxury, from Sardanapalus; while for 'lambiner,' to dally or loiter over a task, they are indebted to Denis Lambin, a worthy Greek scholar of the sixteenth century, whom his adversaries accused of sluggish movement, and wearisome diffuseness in style. The name of an unpopular French minister of finance, M. de Silhouette, unpopular because he sought to cut down unnecessary expenses in the state, was applied to whatever was cheap and, as was implied, unduly economical. It has survived in the black outline portrait which is now called a 'silhouette.' (Sismondi, *Histoire des Français*, t. 19, p. 94, 95.) I need hardly add 'guillotine.'

of big talking about him, 'to hector' from him;* while the medieval romances about the siege of Troy ascribe to Pandarus that shameful ministry out of which his name has past into the words 'to pandar' and 'pandarism.' 'Rodomontade' is from Rodomont, a blustering and boasting hero of Boiardo, and adopted by Ariosto; 'thrasonical' from Thraso, the braggart in the Latin comedies. Cervantes has given us 'quixotic'; Swift, 'liliputian'; to Moliere the French language owes 'tartuffe,' and 'tartufferie.' 'Reynard' too, which with us is a duplicate for fox, while in the French 'renard' has quite excluded the older 'volpils,' was originally not the name of a kind, but the proper name of the fox hero, the vulpine Ulysses, in that famous beast-epic of the middle ages, *Reineke Fuchs*; the immense popularity of which we gather from many evidences, from none more clearly than from this. 'Chanticleer' and 'Bruin' are in like manner the proper names of the cock and bear in the same poem; these have not made fortune to the same extent of actually putting out in any language the names which before existed, but still have become quite familiar to us all.

We must not count as new words properly so called, although they may delay us for a minute, those comic words, most often comic combinations formed at will, and sometimes of enormous length, in which, as plays and displays of power, great writers ancient and modern have delighted. These for the

* See Mure's *Language and Literature of Ancient Greece*, vol. i. p. 350.

most part are meant to do service for the moment, and then to pass away. The inventors of them had themselves no intention of fastening them permanently on the language. Thus among the Greeks Aristophanes coined *μελλονικιάω*, to loiter like Nicias, with allusion to the delays with which this prudent commander sought to put off the disastrous Sicilian expedition, with not a few other familiar to every scholar. The humour of them sometimes consists in their enormous length, as in the *ἀμφιπτολεμοπηδησίστρατος* of Eupolis; sometimes in their mingled observance and transgression of the laws of the language, as in the ‘*oculissimus*’ of Plautus, a comic superlative of ‘*oculus*’; as in the ‘*dosones*,’ ‘*dabones*,’ which in Greek and in mediæval Latin were names given to those who were ever promising, ever saying “I will give,” but never performing their promise. Plautus with his exuberant wit, and out of his mastery and command of the Latin language, will compose four or five lines consisting entirely of comic combinations thrown off for the occasion.* Of the same character is Butler’s ‘*cynarctomachy*,’ or battle of a dog and bear. Nor do I suppose that Fuller, when he used ‘to avunculize,’ to imitate or follow in the steps of one’s uncle, or Cowper, when he suggested ‘*extraforaneous*’ for ‘out of doors,’ in the least intended them as lasting additions to the language.

Sometimes a word springs up in a very curious way; here is one, not having, I suppose, any great

* *Persa*, 4, 6, 20—23.

currency except among schoolboys; yet being no invention of theirs, but a genuine English word, though of somewhat late birth in the language, I mean 'to chouse.' It has a singular origin. The word is, as I have mentioned already, a Turkish one, and signifies 'interpreter.' Such an interpreter or 'chiaous' (written 'chaus' in Hackluyt, 'chiaus' in Massinger), being attached to the Turkish embassy in England, committed in the year 1609 an enormous fraud on the Turkish and Persian merchants resident in London. He succeeded in cheating them of a sum amounting to £4000—a sum very much greater at that day than at the present. From the vast dimensions of the fraud, and the notoriety which attended it, any one who cheated or defrauded was said 'to chiaous,' 'chause,' or 'chouse;' to do, that is, as this 'chiaous' had done.*

There is another very fruitful source of new words in a language, or perhaps rather another way in which it increases its vocabulary, for a question might arise whether the words thus produced ought to be called new. I mean through the splitting of single words into two or even more. The impulse and suggestion to this is in general

* It is curious that a correspondent of Skinner (*Etymologia*, 1671) although quite ignorant of this story, had suggested that 'chouse' might be thus connected with the Turkish 'chiaus.' I believe that Gifford, in his edition of Ben Jonson, has the honour of having first cleared up the matter. To this he was naturally led by a passage in the *Alchemist*, Act i. Sc. 1, which put him on the right track for the discovery.

first given by varieties in spelling ; but the result very often is that what at first were only precarious and arbitrary differences in this, come in the end to be regarded as entirely different words, each with its own distinct domain of meaning, which as by general agreement is assigned to it. The words at parting divide the inheritance between them, which hitherto they held in common. No one who has not had his attention called to this matter, who has not watched and catalogued these words as they have come under his notice, would at all believe how numerous they are. When I adduced in a former work* nearly eighty examples in this kind, separating off into more than twice that number of words, I supposed that while a few might have escaped my notice, I had yet nearly adduced all. So far, however, was this from the case, that I could illustrate what I have just affirmed of the generation in this way of words with the following additional examples ; and I now have no doubt whatever that there is a large number which I have left, and which still remain to be gathered in. Thus ‘clot’ and ‘clod’ were only different spellings once of the same word ; yet now it is always ‘clots’ of blood, and ‘clods’ of earth. So was it with ‘vend’ and ‘vent ;’ but now men ‘vend’ wares, and ‘vent’ complaints ; with ‘float’ and ‘fleet ;’ but now we have used ourselves to speak of a ‘float’ of timber, and a ‘fleet’ of ships ; with ‘crone’ and ‘crony’ (“ Marry not an old *crony* or

* *Study of Words*, p. 156—160.

a fool for money :” Burton) ; ‘ writhe’ and ‘ wreathe’ (Mark xv. 17, Wiclif) ; ‘ sop,’ ‘ soup’ and ‘ sup ;’ ‘ wake’ and ‘ watch ;’ ‘ knoll’ and ‘ noll ;’ ‘ tamper’ and ‘ temper ;’ ‘ grits’ and ‘ grouts ;’ ‘ band,’ ‘ bend’ and ‘ bond ;’ ‘ patron’ and ‘ pattern ;’ ‘ chagrin’ and ‘ shagreen ;’* ‘ housewife’ and ‘ hussey ;’ ‘ drachm’ and ‘ dram ;’ ‘ brat’ and ‘ brood ;’ ‘ tetchy’ and ‘ touchy ;’ ‘ thrill,’ ‘ trill’ and ‘ drill ;’ ‘ bursar’ and ‘ purser ;’ ‘ accompt’ and ‘ account ;’ ‘ masque’ and ‘ mask ;’ ‘ nighest’ and ‘ next ;’ ‘ chivalry’ and ‘ cavalry ;’ ‘ nourish’ and ‘ nurse ;’ ‘ spital’ (= hospital) and ‘ spittle’ (= house of correction) ; ‘ shallop’ and ‘ sloop ;’ ‘ ordinance’ and ‘ ordnance ;’ ‘ snake’ and ‘ sneak’ (both crawl) ; ‘ spirt’ and ‘ sprout ;’ ‘ then’ and ‘ than ;’ ‘ stud’ and ‘ steed ;’ ‘ gulp’ and ‘ gulph ;’ ‘ cord’ and ‘ chord ;’ ‘ break’ and ‘ breach ;’ ‘ deal’ and ‘ dole ;’ ‘ lurk’ and ‘ lurch ;’ ‘ trice’ and ‘ thrice ;’ ‘ syrop’ and ‘ shrub ;’ ‘ Britain’ and ‘ Britany ;’ ‘ Francis’ and ‘ Frances.’†

But my subject is inexhaustible ; it has no limits except those, which indeed may be often narrow enough, imposed by my own ignorance on the one side ; and on the other, by the necessity of consulting your patience, and of only choosing such matter as will admit a popular setting forth. These necessities, however, bid me to pause, and suggest that I should not look round for other quarters from

* See Diez, *Wörterbuch d. Roman. Sprachen*, p. 588.

† The distinguishing of this female Christian name by a slight difference in spelling is quite of modern introduction ; see Ben Jonson’s *New Inn*, Act ii. Sc. 1. ; and Fuller’s *Holy State*, b. iv. c. 14.

whence accessions of new words are derived. Doubtless I should not be long without finding many such. I must satisfy myself for the rest with a very brief consideration of the *motives* which, as they have been, are still at work among us, inducing us to seek for these augmentations of our vocabulary.

And first, the desire of greater clearness is a frequent motive and inducement to this. It has been well and truly said: "Every new term, expressing a fact or a difference not precisely or adequately expressed by any other word in the same language, is a new organ of thought for the mind that has learned it."* The limits of their vocabulary are in fact for most men the limits of their knowledge; and for all of us in a great degree. Of course I do not affirm that it is absolutely impossible to have our mental conceptions clearer and more distinct than our words; but it is very hard to have, and still harder to keep, them so. And therefore it is that men, conscious of this, so soon as ever they have learned to distinguish in their minds, seek also to distinguish in their words.

The desire of greater explicitness, the sense that a word covers too large a space of meaning, is the frequent occasion of the introduction of another, which shall relieve it of a portion of this. Thus, there was a time when 'witch' was applied equally to male and female dealers in unlawful magical arts. Simon Magus for example is styled a 'witch' in Wiclif's *New Testament*, and Posthumus in

* Coleridge, *Church and State*, p. 200.

Shakespeare's *Cymbeline*: but when the medieval Latin, 'sortiarius,' supplied another word, 'sorcier,' 'sorcerer,' (originally 'the caster of lots'), then 'witch' gradually was confined to the hag, or female practiser of these arts, while 'sorcerer' was applied to the male.

New necessities, new evolutions of society into more complex conditions, evoke new words; which come forth, because they are required now, but did not formerly exist, because they were not required in the period preceding. For example, in Greece so long as the poet sang his own verses, 'singer' (ἀοιδός) sufficiently expressed the double function; such a 'singer' was Homer, and such he describes Demodocus, the bard of the Phæacians; that double function, in fact, not being in his time contemplated as double, but each part of it so naturally belonging to the other, that no second word was required. When, however, in the division of labour one made the verses which another chaunted, then 'poet' or 'maker,' a word unknown in the Homeric age, arose. In like manner, when 'physicians' were the only natural philosophers, the word covered this meaning, as well as that other which it still retains; but when the investigation of nature and natural causes detached itself from the art of healing, became an independent study of itself, the name 'physician' remained to that which was as the stock and stem of the art, while the new offshoot sought out a new name for itself.

Another motive to the invention of new words is the desire thereby to cut short lengthy explanations,

tedious circuits of language. Science is often a great gainer by words, so far as they can be called such, which say at a stroke what it would have taken sentences otherwise to have said. Thus 'isothermal' is quite of modern invention ; but what a long story it would be to tell the meaning of '*isothermal* lines,' all which is saved by the word.

Or take another more familiar example ; the term 'watershed' has only recently begun to appear in books of geography, and yet how convenient it must be admitted to be ; meaning, as I need hardly tell you it does, not merely that which *sheds* the waters, but that which *divides* them ('*wasserscheide*') ; and being applied to that exact ridge and highest line in a mountain region, where the waters of that region separate off and divide, some to one side, and some to the other ; as in the Rocky Mountains of North America there are streams rising within very few miles of one another, which flow severally east and west, and, if not in unbroken course, yet as affluents to larger rivers, fall at last severally into the Pacific and Atlantic oceans. It must be allowed, I think, that not merely geographical terminology, but geography itself, had a benefactor in him who first endowed it with so expressive and comprehensive a word, bringing before us a fact which we should scarcely have been aware of without it.

There is another word which I have just employed, 'affluent,' in the sense of a stream which does not flow into the sea, but joins a larger stream, as for instance the Moselle is an 'affluent' of the

Rhine. It is itself an example in the same kind of that whereof I have been speaking, having been only recently constituted a substantive, and employed in this sense, while yet its utility is obvious.

Again, new words are coined out of the necessity which men feel of filling up gaps in the language. Thoughtful men, comparing their own language with that of other nations, become conscious of deficiencies, of important matters unexpressed in their own, and with more or less success proceed to supply the deficiency. For example, that too common sin, the undue love of self, with the postponing of the interests of all others to our own, had for a long time no word to express it in English. One writer tried to supply the want by calling the man a 'suist,' as one seeking 'sua,' or his own things, and the sin itself, 'suicism.' 'Philauty' (φιλαυτία) had been more than once attempted by our scholars. The gap, however, was not really filled up, till some of the Puritan writers devised 'selfish' and 'selfishness,' words which to us seem obvious enough, but which yet are not more than two hundred years old.*

Before quitting this part of the subject, let me

* I have quoted elsewhere a passage from Hacket's *Life of Archbishop Williams*, marking the first rise of this word, and the quarter from which it arose. In Whitelock's *Zootomia* (1654) there is another indication of it as a novelty, p. 364: "If constancy may be tainted with this *selfishness* (to use our new wordings of old and general actings)." It is he who in his striking Essay, *The Grand Schismatic, or Suist anatomized*, puts forward his own words, 'suist,' and 'suicism,' in lieu of those which have ultimately been adopted.

say a few words in conclusion on this deliberate introduction of words to supply felt omissions in a language, and the limits within which this or any other conscious interference with the development of a language is desirable or possible. By the time that a people begin to meditate upon their language, to be aware by a conscious reflective act either of its merits or deficiencies, by far the greater and more important part of its work is done ; it is fixed in respect of its structure in immutable forms ; the region in which any alteration or modification, addition to it, or subtraction from it, deliberately devised and carried out, may be possible, is very limited indeed. Its great laws are too firmly established to admit of this ; so that almost nothing can be taken from it, which it has got ; almost nothing added to it, which it has *not* got. It will travel indeed in certain courses of change ; but it would be as easy almost to alter the career of a planet as for man to alter these. This is sometimes a subject of regret with those who see what they believe manifest defects or blemishes in their language, and such as appear to them capable of remedy. And yet in fact this is well ; since for once that these redressers of real or fancied wrongs, these suppliers of things lacking, would have mended, we may be tolerably confident that ten times, yea, a hundred times, they would have marred ; letting go that which it would have been well to have retained ; retaining that which by a necessary law the language now lets fall ; and in manifold ways interfering with the pro-

cesses of natural logic. The genius of a language, unconsciously presiding over all its transformations, and conducting them to a definite issue, will have been a far truer, far safer guide, than the artificial wit, however subtle, of any single man, or of any association of men. For the genius of a language is the utterance of the sense and inner conviction of all who speak it, as to what it ought to be, and as to how it will best attain its objects ; the other attempt is but that of a few ; and while a pair of eyes, or two or three pairs of eyes may see much, millions of eyes will certainly see more.

In the forms and laws of a language any interference such as that which I have supposed is impossible ; it can only find place in the words. Something, indeed much, may here be done by wise masters, in the way of rejecting that which would deform, allowing and adopting that which will strengthen and enrich. Those who would purify or enrich a language, so long as they have kept within this their proper sphere, have often effected much, far more than at first could have seemed possible. The history of the German language affords so much better illustration of this than our own would do, that I shall make no scruple in seeking my examples there. When the patriotic Germans began to wake up to a consciousness of the enormous encroachments which foreign languages, the Latin and French above all, had made on their native tongue, the lodgements which they had therein effected, and the danger which threatened it, namely, that it should cease to be German at all,

but only a mingle-mangle, a variegated patchwork of many languages, without any unity or inner coherence at all, various societies were instituted among them, at the beginning and during the course of the seventeenth century, for the recovering of what was lost of their own, for the expelling of that which had intruded from abroad; and these with excellent effect.

But more effectual than these societies were the efforts of single men, who in this merited well of their country. In respect of words which are now entirely received by the whole nation, it is often possible to designate the writers who first substituted them for some affected Gallicism or unnecessary Latinism. Thus to Lessing his fellow-countrymen owe the substitution of 'Zartgefühl' for 'Delicatesse,' of 'Empfindsamkeit' for 'Sentimentalität,' of 'Wesenheit' for 'Essence.' It was Voss (1786) who first employed 'alterthümlich' for 'antik.' Wieland too was the author or reviver of a multitude of excellent words, for which often he had to do earnest battle at the first; such were 'Seligkeit,' 'Anmuth,' 'Entzückung,' 'festlich,' 'entwirren,' with many more. It was a novelty when Büsching called his great work on geography 'Erdbeschreibung' instead of 'Geographie;' and 'Schnellpost' instead of 'Diligence,' 'Zerrbild' for 'Carricatur' are also of recent introduction. Even for 'Wörterbuch,' as J. Grimm tells us, he can find no example of its use dating earlier than 1719.

Yet at the same time it must be acknowledged that some of these reformers proceeded with more

zeal than knowledge, while others did whatever in them lay to make the whole movement absurd—even as there ever hang on the skirts of a noble movement, be it in literature or politics or higher things yet, those who contribute their all to bring ridicule and contempt upon it. Thus in the reaction against foreigners which ensued, and in the zeal to purify the language from them, some went to such extravagant excesses as to desire to get rid of ‘Testament,’ and words like it, consecrated by longest use, and to find native substitutes in their room; or they understood so little what foreign words were, or how to draw the line between them and native, that they would fain have gotten rid of ‘Vater,’ ‘Mutter,’ ‘Wein,’ ‘Fenster,’ ‘Meister,’ ‘Kelch;’* the three first of which belong to the German language by just as good a right as they do to the Latin and the Greek; while the other three have been naturalized so long that to propose to expel them now would be as if, having passed an alien act for the banishment of all foreigners, we should proceed to include under that name, and as such drive forth from the kingdom, the descendants of the French Protestants who found refuge here at the Revocation of the Edict of Nantz, or even of the Flemings who settled among us in the time of our Edwards. One notable enthusiast in this line proposed to create an entirely new nomenclature for all the mythological personages of the

* *Zur Geschichte und Beurtheilung der Fremdwörter im Deutschen*, von Aug. Fuchs, Dessau, 1842, p. 85—91.

Greek and the Roman pantheon, who, one would think, might have been allowed, if any, to retain their Greek and Latin names. So far however from this, they were to exchange these for equivalent German titles; Cupid was to be 'Lustkind,' Flora 'Bluminne,' Aurora 'Röthin;' instead of Apollo schoolboys were to speak of 'Singhold;' instead of Pan of 'Schaflied;' instead of Jupiter of 'Helfevater,' with much else of the same kind. Let us beware (and the warning extends a great deal further than to the matter in hand) of making a good cause ridiculous by our manner of supporting it, of assuming that exaggerations on one side can only be redressed by exaggerations as great upon the other.

LECTURE III.

THE DIMINUTIONS OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE.

I TOOK occasion to observe at the commencement of my last lecture that it is the essential character of a living language to be in flux and flow, to be gaining and losing; the words which constitute it as little continuing exactly the same, or in the same relations to one another, as do the atoms which at any one moment make up our bodies remain for ever without alteration. As I then undertook for my especial subject to trace some of the acquisitions which our own language had made, I shall dedicate the present to a consideration of some of the losses, or at any rate diminutions, which during the same period it has endured. It will however be expedient here to offer one or two preliminary observations for the purpose of guarding against possible misapprehensions of my meaning.

It is certain that all languages must, or at least all languages do in the end, perish; they run their course; they have their youth, their manhood, their old age, their decrepitude, their dissolution. Not indeed that, even when this last hour has arrived, they disappear, leaving no traces behind them. On the contrary, out of their death a new life comes forth; they pass into new forms, the mate-

rials of which they were composed more or less survive, but these now organized in new shapes and according to other laws of life. Thus, for example, the Latin perishes as a living language, but a great part of the words that composed it live on in the four daughter languages, French, Italian, Spanish, and Portuguese; not a few in our own. Still in their own proper being languages perish and pass away; no nations, that is, continue to speak them any more. Seeing then that they thus die, they must have had the germs of death, the possibilities of decay, in them from the very first; nor is this all; but in such mighty strong built fabrics as these, the causes which shall thus produce their final dissolution must have been actually at work very long before the results began to be visible.

Indeed, very often it is with them as with states, which, while in some respects they are knitting and strengthening, in others are already unfolding the seeds of their future and, it may be, still remote overthrow. Equally in these and those, in states and languages, it would be a serious mistake to assume that all up to a certain point and period is growth and gain, and all after, decay and loss. On the contrary, there are long periods during which growth in some directions is going hand in hand with decay in others; losses in one kind are being compensated or more than compensated by gains in another; during which a language changes, but only as the bud changes into the flower, and the flower into the fruit. There is indeed a moment when the growth and gains cease to constitute any

longer a compensation for the losses and the decay ; when these ever become more, those ever less ; when the forces of death and disorganization at work are stronger than of life and order : and from that moment the decline of a language may properly be dated. But until that crisis and turning point has arrived, we may be quite justified in speaking of the losses, the real losses of a language, without in the least thereby implying that the period of its commencing degeneracy has begun ; it may yet be far distant : and therefore when I dwell on certain losses and diminutions which our own has undergone, or is undergoing, you will not conclude that I am seeking to present it to you as now travelling the downward course to dissolution and death. This is very far from my intention. In some respects it is losing, but in others gaining ; nor is everything which it lets go, a loss ; for this too, the having parted with a word in which there is no true help, or with a cumbrous form, may itself be sometimes a most real gain. It is undoubtedly becoming different from what it has been ; but only different in that it is passing into another stage of its development ; only different, as the fruit is different from the flower, and the flower from the bud ; having changed its merits, but not having renounced them ; possessing, it may be, less of beauty, but more of usefulness ; not serving the poet so well, but serving the historian and philosopher and theologian better than of old.

One thing more let me say, before entering on the special details of my subject. It is this. The

losses and diminutions which a language endures differ in one respect from its gains and acquisitions—namely, that they are of *two* kinds, while its gains are only of *one*. Its gains are only in *words*; it never puts forth in the course of its later evolution a new *power*; never makes itself a new case, or a new tense, or a new comparative. But its losses are both in words and in *powers*—in words of course, but in powers also: it leaves behind it, as it travels onward, cases which it once possessed, renounces the employment of tenses which it once used; is content with one termination both for masculine and feminine, and so on: nor is this a peculiar feature of one language, but the universal law of all. “In all languages,” as has been well said, “there is a constant tendency to relieve themselves of that precision which chooses a fresh symbol for every shade of meaning, to lessen the amount of nice distinction, and detect as it were a royal road to the interchange of opinion.” For example, a vast number of languages had at an early period of their development, besides the singular and plural, a dual number, some even a trinal, which they have let go at a later. But what I mean by a language renouncing its powers will, I trust, be more clear to you before my lecture is concluded. I just say this much about it now to explain and justify a division which I shall make, considering first the losses of the English language in the region of *words*, and then in the region of *powers*.

And first, there is going forward a continual ex-

inction of the words in our language—as indeed in every other. When I speak of this the dying out of words, I do not allude to mere *tentative*, experimental words, such as I spoke of in my last lecture, words offered to the language, but not accepted by it; I refer rather to such as either belonged to the primitive stock of the language, or if not so, which had been domiciled in it long, and had appeared to have found a lasting home in it. Thus not a few pure Anglo-Saxon words lived on into the formation of our early English, and yet have since dropped out of our vocabulary, while their places have been filled by others. Not to mention those of Chaucer and Wiclif, which are very numerous, many have lived on to far later periods, and yet have finally given way. That beautiful word ‘wanhope’ for despair, hope which has so *waned* that now there is an entire *want* of it, was in use down to the reign of Elizabeth; it occurs so late as in the poems of Gascoigne.* Spenser uses often ‘to welk’ (welken) in the sense of to fade, ‘to sty’ for to mount, ‘to hery’ as to glorify or praise, ‘to halse’ as to embrace, ‘teene’ as vexation or grief: Shakespeare ‘to tarre’ as to provoke, ‘to sperr’ (sparran) as to enclose or bar in; ‘to sag’ for to droop,

* It is still used in prose as late as the age of Henry VIII.; see the *State Papers*, vol. viii. p. 247. It was the latest survivor of a whole group or family of words which continued much longer in Scotland than with us; of which some perhaps continue there still; these are but a few of them; ‘wanthrift’ for extravagance; ‘wanluck,’ misfortune; ‘wanwit,’ folly; ‘wangrace,’ wickedness; ‘wantrust’ (Chaucer), distrust.

or hang the head downward. Holland employs 'geir'* for falcon, 'reise' for journey, 'frimm' for lusty, fresh, or strong. 'To schimmer' occurs in Bishop Hall; 'to tind,' that is to kindle, surviving in 'tinder', is used by Bishop Sanderson; 'to nimm,' that is, to take, as late as by Fuller. 'Nesh' in the sense of soft through moisture, 'leer' in that of empty, good Saxon-English once, still live on in some of our provincial dialects. Indeed of those above named several do the same; it is so with 'frimme,' with 'to nimm.' 'Heft,' employed by Shakespeare in the sense of weight, is still employed in the same sense by our peasants in Hampshire.

A number of vigorous compounds we have dropped and let go. Such for instance is Wiclif's 'dearworth' for beloved. 'Ear-sports' for entertainments of song or music (ἄκροάματα) is a constantly recurring word in Holland's translation of Plutarch. If not for Shakespeare, we should have quite forgotten that young men of hasty fiery valour were called 'hotspurs;' and even now we regard the word rather as the proper name of one than that which would have been alike the designation of all.† Fuller warns men that they should

* We must not suppose that this still survives in '*girfalcon*;' which wholly belongs to the Latin element of the language; being the later Latin '*gyrofalco*,' and that, "*a gyrando, quia diu gyrando acriter prædam insequitur.*"

† "*Some hot-spurs there were that gave counsel to go against them with all their forces, and to fright and terrify them, if they made slow haste.*" (Holland's *Livy*, p. 922.)

not 'witwanton' with God ; severe austere old men, those who, as Falstaff would say, "hate us youth," were 'grimsirs' or 'grimsires' once (Mas-singer). 'Rootfast' and 'rootfastness' (*State Papers*, vol. vi. p. 534) were ill lost, being worthy to have lived ; so too was Lord Brooke's 'book-hunger ;' and Baxter's 'word-warriors,' with which term he noted those whose strife was only about words. I believe that 'malingerer' has not quite fallen out of use, but I do not find it in our dictionaries, being the soldier who, out of *evil will* (*malin gré*) to his work, shams and shirks, and is not found in the ranks.

Those who would gladly have seen the Anglo-Saxon to have predominated over the Latin element in our language, even more than it actually has done, must note with regret that in a great many instances a word of the former stock has been dropped, and a Latin coined to supply its place ; or where the two once existed side by side, the Saxon has died, and the Latin lived on. Thus Wiclif employed 'soothsaw,' where we now use 'proverb ;' 'sourdough,' where we employ 'leaven ;' 'to after-think' (still in use in Lancashire) for 'to repent ;' 'medeful,' which has given way to 'meritorious.' Sir J. Cheke has 'foresayer' for 'prophet,' Jewel 'foretalk,' where we now employ 'preface ;' 'star-conner' (Gascoigne) did service once, if not instead of 'astrologer,' yet side by side with it ; 'circle-learning' Bacon employs for 'encyclopædia ;' this it is true is only half Saxon ; 'to eyebite' (Holland) was the expressive word which was

employed where we now employ 'to fascinate.' 'Wanhope,' as we saw just now, has given place to 'despair,' 'middler,' for one who goes in the middle, to 'mediator'; 'outlandish' can hardly be said to survive, having been put out of use by 'foreign.'

I had occasion just now to notice the fact that many words survive in our provincial dialects, long after they have died out from the main body of the speech. The fact is one connected with so much of deep interest in the history of language that I cannot pass it thus slightly over. Some further observations may here fitly find room, which shall assist to put us in a right point of view for estimating the character of these, and raising them from that unmerited contempt with which they are often regarded. I shall best accomplish my intention by looking at the matter in connexion with other phenomena of speech. Let us then suppose a portion of those speaking a language to have been separated off from the main body of its speakers, either through their forsaking for one cause or other their native seats, or by the intrusion of a hostile people, like a wedge, between them and the others, forcibly keeping them asunder, and cutting off their communications, as the Saxons intruded between the Britons of Cornwall and of Wales; and it will inevitably happen that before very long differences of speech will begin to reveal themselves between those to whom even dialectic distinctions had been formerly unknown. The divergences will be of various kinds; idioms will come

up in the separated body, which, not being recognized and allowed by those who will continue the arbiters of the language, will be esteemed by them, should they come under their notice, violations of its law, or at any rate departures from its purity. Where a colony has gone forth into new seats, and exists under new conditions, it is probable that the necessities, physical and moral, rising out of these new conditions will give birth to words among them, which there will be nothing to call out among those who continue in the old haunts of the nation; or even their intercourse with people whom they, and not the other, now touch, will bring in new words, as the contact with the Indian tribes has given to American English a certain number of words hardly or not at all allowed by us.

There is another cause, however, which will probably be more effectual than all these, namely, that words will in process of time be dropped by those who constitute the original stock of the nation, which will not be dropped by the offshoot; idioms which those have overlived, and have stored up in the unhonored lumber-room of the past, will still be in use and currency among the smaller and separated section which has gone forth; and thus it will come to pass that what seems and in fact is the newer swarm, will have many older words, and very often an archaic air and old-world fashion both about the words they use, the pronunciation of the words, and the order and manner in which they combine them. Thus after the Conquest we know that our insular

French gradually diverged from the French of the continent. Chaucer's Prioress in the *Canterbury Tales* could speak her French "full faire and fetishly," but it was French, as the poet slyly tells us,

"After the scole of Stratford atte bow,
For French of Paris was to hire unknowe."

One of our old chroniclers, writing in the reign of Elizabeth, informs us that by the English colonists within the Pale in Ireland a great many words were preserved in common use, "the dregs of the old ancient Chaucer English" as he contemptuously calls it, which had become quite obsolete and forgotten in England itself. For example they still called a spider an 'attercop'—a word by the way, which in the North has not even now gone out of popular use; a physician a 'leech;' a dunghill was still for them a 'mixen;' a quadrangle or base court a 'bawn;'* they employed 'uncouth' in the earlier sense of unknown—nay more, their general manner of speech was so different, though continuing English still, that Englishmen at their first coming over often found it hard or impossible to comprehend. We have another example of the same in what took place after the revocation of the Edict of Nantz, and the consequent formation of colonies of Protestant French emigrants in various places, especially in Amsterdam and other chief cities of

* The only two writers of whom I am aware as subsequently using this word are, both writing in Ireland and of Irish matters, Spenser and Swift. The passages are both quoted by Richardson.

Holland. There gradually grew up among these what came to be called "refugee French," which within a generation or two diverged in several particulars from the classical language ; its divergence being mainly occasioned by this, that it remained stationary, where the classical language was in motion ; it retained usages and words, which the latter had consented to let go.

Nor is it otherwise in respect of our English provincialisms. It is true that our country people who in the main employ them, have not been separated by distance of space, nor yet by insurmountable obstacles intervening, from the main body of their fellow-countrymen ; but they have been quite as effectually divided by deficient education. They have been, if not locally, yet intellectually, kept at a distance from the onward march of the nation's mind ; and of them also it is true that a great number of their words, idioms, turns of speech, which we are ready to set down as vulgarisms, solecisms of speech, violations of the primary rules of grammar, do merely attest that those who employ them have not kept abreast with the advance of the language and nation, but have been left behind by it. The usages are only local in the fact that, having once been employed by the whole body of the English people, they have now receded from the lips of all except those in some certain country districts, who have been more faithful than others to the traditions of the language.

It is thus in respect of a great number of

isolated words, which were excellent Anglo-Saxon, which were excellent early English, and which only are not excellent present English, because use, which is the supreme arbiter in these matters, has decided against their further employment. Several of these I enumerated just now. It is thus also with several grammatical forms and flexions. For instance, where we decline the plural of 'I sing,' 'we sing,' 'ye sing,' 'they sing,' in Lancashire they would decline, 'we singen,' 'ye singen,' 'they singen.' This is not indeed the original form of the plural, but it is that form of it which, coming up about Chaucer's time, was just going out in Spenser's; he, though we must ever keep in mind that he does not represent exactly the language of his time, affecting a certain archaism both in words and forms, continually uses it, while after him it becomes ever rarer, the last of whom I am aware as occasionally using it being Fuller, until it quite disappears.*

* Ben Jonson (*English Grammar*, c. 17) does not hesitate to express his strong regret that this form has not been retained. "The *persons* plural," he says, "keep the termination of the first *person* singular. In former times, till about the reign of King Henry VIII., they were wont to be formed by adding *en*; thus, *loven*, *sayen*, *complainen*. But now (whatsoever is the cause) it hath quite grown out of use, and that other so generally prevailed, that I dare not presume to set this afoot again; albeit (to tell you my opinion) I am persuaded that the lack hereof, well considered, will be found a great blemish to our tongue. For seeing *time* and *person* be as it were the right and left hand of a verb, what can the maiming bring else, but a lameness to the whole body?"

The termination of the participle present in 'ande' or 'and,' which was first changed into 'end,' and then further softened into 'ing;' 'send~~ande~~,' 'send~~end~~,' 'send~~ing~~,' may be observed in Scotch poetry down to a very recent date. In the earlier shape in which we possess Wiclif's Bible 'and' or 'end' is predominantly, and in some parts of it invariably, used as the participial termination; while in the somewhat later revision 'ing' has taken its place. In Chaucer the old form still occasionally struggles with the new; thus 'lepan~~de~~,' 'crian~~de~~' for 'leaping,' 'crying;' but it has nearly given way. In Spenser a solitary example of it crops up in the term 'glitter~~und~~ arms,' which he is fond of employing.

Of such as may now employ forms like these we must say, not that they violate the laws of the language, but only that they have taken their *permanent* stand at a point of it which was only a point of transition, and which it has now left behind, and overlived. Thus to take examples which you may hear at the present day in almost any part of England — a countryman will say, "He made me *afeard*;" or "The price of corn *ris* last market day;" or "I will *axe* him his name." You would probably set these phrases down for barbarous English; but they are not at all so; in one sense they are quite as good English as "He made me *afraid*;" or "The price of corn *rose* last market day;" or "I will *ask* him his name." 'Afeard,' used by Spenser, is the regular participle of the old verb 'to affear,' as 'afraid' is of 'to affray,' and just as

good English ; ‘ris’ or ‘risse’ is an old præterite of ‘to rise ;’ ‘to axe’ is not a mispronunciation of ‘to ask,’ but a genuine English form of the word, the form which in the earlier English it constantly assumed ; it is quite exceptional when the word appears in its other, that is its present, shape in Wiclif’s Bible ; and indeed ‘axe’ occurs continually, I know not whether invariably, in Tyndale’s translation of the Scriptures. Even such a phrase as “Put *them* things away,” is not bad, but only antiquated, English. While I say this, I would not imply that these forms are open to you to use ; I do not say they would be good English *for you*. They would not ; inasmuch as they are contrary to present use and custom, and these must be our lawgivers in what we speak and in what we write ; just as in our buying and selling we are bound to use the current coin of the realm, and not attempt to pass that which long since has been called in, whatever merits or intrinsic value it may possess. All which I affirm is that the phrases just brought forward represent past stages of the language, and are not barbarous violations of it.

The same may be asserted of certain ways of pronouncing words, which are now in use among the lower classes, but not among the higher ; as, for example, ‘contrāry,’ ‘mischiëvous,’ ‘blasphēmous,’ instead of ‘contrāry,’ ‘mischiëvous,’ ‘blasphēmous.’ It would be abundantly easy to show by a multitude of quotations from our poets, and those reaching very far down, that these are merely the retention of the earlier pronunciation by

the people, when the higher classes have abandoned it.*

Another example of that which is commonly accounted ungrammatical usage, but which is really the retention of old grammar by some, where others have substituted new, is the constant application by our rustic population in the south of 'his' to inanimate objects, and to these not personified, as well as to persons; where 'its' would be employed by others. I shall presently call your attention to the late introduction of this little word 'its' into the English language. It rests indeed altogether on a mistake and a forgetfulness of the true constructions of the language. It would be long to explain this at full: it has been explained well in Latham's *English Grammar*. I will endeavour very briefly to put the matter before you, and trace the steps by which this came to pass. Let me prepare the way by reminding you first that 'his' does not exactly correspond to 'suus,' but to 'ejus' or 'illius,' being the genitive of 'he' ('he's' = 'his'); and that 'it,' or 'hit,' as it was long written (Sir Thomas More in general so writes it, but about his time 'hit' is going out) is the neuter of 'he,' the final 't' being the sign of this neuter, just as 'illud' is the neuter of 'ille.' Now, by way of illustrating the matter in hand, let us suppose that those who spoke the Latin language had forgotten that the final 'd'

* A single proof may in each case suffice:

"Our wills and fates do so *contráry* run."—*Shakespeare*.

"Ne let *mischiévous* witches with their charms."—*Spenser*.

"O argument *blasphémous*, false and proud."—*Milton*.

in 'illud' was the sign of the neuter ; let us suppose further that 'illud' through some cause or other had still further lost in their eyes its connexion with 'ille,' as 'hit' through becoming 'it' has obscured its relation to 'he ;' and that it had been dealt with by them quite as an independent word, upon which they proceeded to form a genitive of its own ; 'illius' no longer seeming to them such genitive, and that they had proceeded to fashion an 'illudius ;' so doing they would have committed exactly the same error which we have committed in forming the word 'its,' and in dismissing 'his' from any longer serving as the neuter genitive no less than the masculine. I do not say that many conveniences have not attended the change : the desire to obtain these was doubtless the motive to the creation of this genitive ; which still rested on a misapprehension, and however now sanctioned by time and usage, can be considered as originally only a blunder.

Attention once called to the matter, one is surprised to discover of how late introduction the word 'its' proves to be into the language. Through the whole of our authorized Version of the Bible 'its' does not once occur ; the work which it now performs being accomplished, as our rustics would now accomplish it, by 'his'* or 'her'† applied as

* Thus Exod. xxxvii. 17 : "Of beaten work made he the candlestick ; *his* shaft and *his* branch, *his* knops, and *his* flowers, were of the same ;" cf. Mt. v. 15.

† Rev. xxii. 2 : "The tree of life, which yielded *her* fruit every month."

freely to inanimate things as to persons, or else by 'thereof' or 'of it.' 'Its' occurs, I believe, only three times in all Shakespeare, and I doubt whether Milton has once admitted it into *Paradise Lost*, although, when that was composed, others freely allowed it. How soon all this was forgotten we have striking evidence in the fact that Dryden, when in one of his fault-finding moods with the great men of the preceding generation he is taking Ben Jonson to task for general inaccuracy in his English diction, among other counts of his indictment, quotes this line from *Catiline*,

"Though heaven should speak with all *his* wrath at once,"

and proceeds, "*heaven* is ill syntax with *his*;" while in fact up to within forty or fifty years of the time when Dryden began to write, no other syntax was known. Curious also is it to note that in the long controversy, which followed on the publication by Chatterton of the poems which he ascribed to a monk Rowlie, living in the fifteenth century, no one appealed at the time to such lines as the following,

"Life, and all *its* goods I scorn,"

as at once decisive of the fact that the poems were not of the age which they pretended. Warton who rejected, although with a certain amount of hesitation, the poems, and gives reasons, and many of them good ones, for this rejection, yet takes no notice of this little word, which betrays the forgery at once; although there needed nothing more than

to point to it, for the disposing of the whole question.*

* Lest this digression should grow to an immoderate length, I must append in a note another illustration of the matter in hand.

Instead of 'luncheon,' our country people in Hampshire, as in many other parts, always use the form 'nuncheon' or 'nuntion.' I cannot doubt that either this was the original pronunciation, and our received one a modern corruption; or else, and this appears to me more probable, that *we* have made a confusion between two originally different words, from which they have kept clear. Thus in Howell's *Vocabulary*, 1659, and in Cotgrave's *French and English Dictionary*, both words occur: "nuncion or nuncheon, the afternoon's repast," and "lunchion, a big piece" *i. e.* of bread, for both give the old French 'caribot' as the equivalent of luncheon, which word has this meaning. It is clear that in this sense of lump or 'big piece' Gay uses 'luncheon:'

"When hungry thou stood'st staring like an oaf,
I sliced the *luncheon* from the barley loaf."

and Miss Baker in her *Northamptonshire Glossary* explains 'lunch' as "a large lump of bread, or other edible; 'He helped himself to a good *lunch* of cake.'" We may note further that this 'nuntion' may possibly put us on the right track for arriving at the etymology of the word. Richardson has called attention to the fact that it is spelt "noon-shun" in Browne's *Pastorals*, which must at least suggest as possible and plausible that the 'nuntion' was originally applied to the labourer's slight meal, to which he withdrew for the *shunning* of the heat of the middle *noon*. It is at any rate certain that the dignity to which 'lunch' or 'luncheon' has now arrived, as when we read in the newspapers of a "magnificent *luncheon*," is altogether modern; the word belonged a century ago to rustic life, and in literature had not travelled beyond the "hobnailed pastorals" which professed to describe that life.

What has been here said in respect of much of our provincial English, namely that it is *old* English rather than *bad* English, may be affirmed, no doubt, with equal right in respect of many so called Americanisms. There are parts of America where 'het' is used or was used a few years since as the perfect of 'to heat;' 'holp' as the perfect of 'to help;' 'stricken' as the participle of 'to strike.' Again, there are words which have become obsolete here during the last two hundred years, which have not become obsolete there, although many of them probably retain only a provincial life. The excellent word, 'freshet,' for a river swollen by rain or other causes, and rushing with wider and more rapid current than usual to the sea, which would scarcely be found in English since Milton employed it,* has never been out of use in America, having lately come back to us from thence. Other words again, which indeed have continued in currency on both sides of the Atlantic, have yet on our side receded from their original use, while they have not receded from it on the other. 'Plunder' is a word in point; so too when *unleavened* cakes are called "*sad* cakes," as in parts of America they are, it is evident that 'sad' is used in its original sense of unmoved, being but another spelling of

* "All fish from sea or shore,

Freshet or purling brook, of shell or fin:"

Todd misunderstands the word, explaining it "a stream of fresh water." Not so; but as the whole passage moves in antitheses, "sea or shore," "shell or fin," so "*freshet* or *purling* brook."

‘set’—a sense which once the proper one of the word, has now left it with us.*

In the contemplation of facts like these it has been sometimes asked, whether a day will ever arrive when the language spoken on this side of the Atlantic and on the other, will divide into two languages, an old English and a new. We may confidently answer, No. Doubtless, if those who went out from us to people and subdue a new continent, had left our shores two or three centuries earlier than they did, when the language was very much farther removed from that ideal after which it was unconsciously striving, and in which, once reached, it in great measure acquiesced; if they had not carried with them to their distant homes their English Bible, and what else of worth had been already uttered in the English tongue; if, having once left us, the intercourse between Old and New England had been entirely broken off, or only rare and partial; there would then have unfolded themselves differences between the language spoken here and there, which in tract of time accumulating and multiplying, might in the end have justified the regarding of the languages as no longer one and the same. It could not have been otherwise than that such differences should have displayed them-

* Pickering's *Vocabulary of Words and Phrases, supposed to be peculiar to America*, Boston, 1816. I would gladly in a future edition treat the matter of this paragraph with something more of the fulness which it deserves, if any transatlantic readers from the stores of their own experience would help me.

selves; for while there is a law of necessity in the evolution of languages, while they pursue certain courses and in certain directions, from which they can be no more turned aside by the will of men than one of the heavenly bodies could be pushed from its orbit by any engines of ours, there is a law of liberty no less; and this liberty would not have failed to make itself in many ways felt. In the political and social condition of America, so far removed from ours, in the many natural objects which are not the same with those which surround us here, in efforts independently carried out to rid the language of imperfections, or to unfold its latent powers, even in the different effects of climate on the organs of speech, there would have been causes enough to have provoked in the course of time not immaterial divergencies of language.

As it is, however, the joint operation of those three causes referred to already, namely, that the separation did not take place till after the language had attained the ripeness of maturity, that England and America owned a common body of literature to which they alike looked up and appealed, as containing the authoritative standards of the language, that the intercourse between the one people and the other has been large and frequent, as probably it will be larger and more frequent still, these have been strong enough to traverse and check these tendencies, have so effectually combined in repressing such divergence, that the *written* language of educated men on both sides of the water remains precisely the same, their *spoken* manifesting

a few trivial differences of idiom; while even among those classes which do not consciously recognize any ideal standard of language, there are scarcely greater differences, in some respects far smaller, than exist between inhabitants of different provinces in this one island of England; and in the future we may reasonably anticipate that these differences, so far from increasing, will have rather the tendency to diminish.

It seems often as if an almost unaccountable caprice presided over the fortunes of words, and determined which should live and which die. Thus in a vast number of instances a word lives on as a verb, but has ceased to be employed as a noun; we say 'to embarrass,' but no longer an 'embarrass;' 'to revile,' but not, with Chapman and Milton, a 'revile;' 'to wed,' but not a 'wed,' unless it should be urged that this survives in '*wed*-lock,' a locking or binding together through the giving and receiving of a 'wed' or pledge, namely the ring; we say 'to infest,' but not any longer 'infest.' Or with a reversed fortune a word lives on as a noun, but has perished as a verb—thus as a noun substantive, a 'slug,' but no longer 'to slug' or render slothful; a 'child,' but no longer 'to child' ('childing autumn,' Beaumont and Fletcher); or as a noun adjective, 'serene,' but not 'to serene,' a beautiful word, which we have let go, as the French have 'sereiner;'

* How many words modern French has lost which are most vigorous and admirable, the absence of which can only now be supplied by a circumlocution or by some less excellent

‘meek,’ but not ‘to meek’ (Wiclif); ‘fond,’ but not with Dryden, ‘to fond.’

Or, again, the affirmative remains, but the negative is gone; thus ‘wisdom,’ but not any more ‘unwisdom’ (Wiclif); ‘cunning,’ but not ‘uncunning;’ ‘manhood,’ ‘wit,’ ‘mighty,’ but not ‘unmanhood,’ ‘unwit,’ ‘unmighty’ (all in Chaucer); ‘buxom,’ but not ‘unbuxom’ (Dryden); ‘to know,’ but not ‘to unknow’ (Wiclif), which survives only in ‘unknowing’ and ‘unknown.’ Or once more, with a curious variation from this, the negative survives, while the affirmative is gone; thus ‘wieldy’ (Chaucer) survives only in ‘unwieldy;’ ‘couth’ and ‘couthly’ (both in Spenser), only in ‘uncouth’ and ‘uncouthly;’ ‘ruly’ (Foxe) only in ‘unruly;’ ‘gainly’ (H. More) in ‘ungainly;’ these two last were both of them serviceable words, and have been ill lost; ‘exorable’ (Holland) and ‘evitable’ only in ‘inexorable’ and ‘inevitable.’ In like manner ‘semble’ (Foxe) and ‘hearten’ (Chapman) have disappeared; while ‘dissemble’ and ‘dishearten’ continue. So also of other pairs one has been taken and one left; ‘height,’ or ‘highth,’ as Milton better spelt it, remains, but ‘lowth’ (Becon) is gone; ‘righteousness,’ or ‘rightwiseness,’ as it would once and more accurately have been written,

word—‘Oseur,’ ‘affranchisseur’ (Amyot), ‘mépriseur,’ ‘murmureur,’ ‘blandisseur’ (Bossuet), ‘abuseur’ (Rabelais), ‘désabusement,’ ‘rancœur,’ are all obsolete at the present. So ‘désaimer,’ to cease to love (‘disamare’ in Italian), ‘guirlander,’ ‘stériliser,’ ‘blandissant,’ ‘ordonnement’ (Montaigne), with innumerable others.

remains, but its correspondent 'wrongwiseness' has been taken. Again, of whole groups of words formed after some particular scheme it may be only a single specimen will survive. Thus 'gainsay,' that is, again say, survives; but 'gainstrive' (Foxe), that is, resist, 'gainstand,' and other similarly formed words exist no longer. It is the same with 'foolhardy,' which is but one, though now indeed the only one remaining, of three or four adjectives formed on the same principle; thus 'foollarge,' at least as expressive a word as 'prodigal,' occurs in Chaucer, and 'foolhasty,' found also in him, lived on to the time of Holland; while 'foolhappy' is in Spenser. 'Exhort' remains; but 'dehort,' a word whose place neither 'dissuade' nor any other exactly supplies, has escaped us. We have 'twilight,' but 'twibill' (= bipennis: Chapman) is extinct.

Let me mention another real loss, where in like manner there remains in the present language something to remind us of that which is gone. The comparative 'rather' stands alone, having dropped on either side its positive 'rathe,' and superlative 'rathest.' 'Rathe,' having the sense of early, though a graceful word, and not fallen quite even out of popular remembrance, inasmuch as it is embalmed in the *Lycidas* of Milton,

"And the *rathe* primrose, which forsaken dies,"

might still be suffered to share the common lot of so many words which have perished, though worthy to live; but the disuse of 'rathest' has created a real gap in the language, and the more so, seeing

that 'liefest' is gone too. 'Rather' expresses the Latin 'potius;' but 'rathest' being gone, we have no word, unless 'soonest' may be accepted as such, to express 'potissimum,' that is the preference not of one way over another or over certain others, but of one over all; which we therefore effect by dint of various circumlocutions. Nor is 'rathest' so long out of use, that it would be a playing of the antic to attempt to revive it. On the contrary, it is found so late as in Bishop Sanderson's *Sermons*, who in the opening of that beautiful one on the text, "When my father and my mother forsake me, the Lord taketh me up," puts the consideration, "why these," that is, father and mother, "are named the *rathest*, and the rest to be included in them."*

The causes which are at work to bring about that certain words, becoming in the course of time obsolete, drop out of the living spoken tongue, are often very hard to arrive at—how, that is, there should be a certain tacit consent on the part of a whole people not to employ them any more; for without this, they could not have died out. I must be content with little more than calling your attention to the fact, and illustrating it by a few examples. That it is not accident, that there is a law here at work, however hidden it may be from us, is plain from the fact that certain families of words, words formed on certain principles, have a tendency thus to fall into desuetude.

* For other passages in which 'rathest' occurs, see the *State Papers*, vol. ii. pp. 92, 170.

Thus, I think, we may trace a certain tendency in words ending in 'some,' the Anglo-Saxon and early English, 'sum,' the German, 'sam' ('friedsam,' 'seltsam') to fall out of use. It is true that a vast number of these survive, as 'gladsome,' 'handsome,' 'wearisome,' 'buxom' (this last spelt better 'bucksome' by our earlier writers, for its present spelling altogether disguises its true character, and the family to which it belongs; being the same word as the German 'beugsam' or 'biegsam,' bendable, compliant); but a large number of these words, more than can be ascribed to accident, more than their due proportion, are either quite or nearly extinct. Thus in Wiclif's Bible alone you might note the following, 'lovesum,' 'hatesum,' 'lustsum,' 'heavysum,' 'lightsum,' 'delightsum;' all of which, except the last, are gone, and that, although used in our authorized Version, now only survives in poetry. So too 'brightsome' (Marlowe), 'wieldsome' (Golding), 'unlightsome' (Milton), 'ugsome' (Foxye), 'laboursome' (Shakespeare), 'longsome' (Gascoigne), 'quietsome,' 'mirksome' (both in Spenser), 'toothsome' (Beaumont and Fletcher), 'gleesome,' 'joysome,' (both in Browne's *Pastorals*), 'meddlesome' (Barrow), 'bigsome,' 'winsome,' 'do-some,' meaning prosperous, well-to-do, a word still surviving in the North, 'playsome' (employed by the historian Hume), have nearly or quite disappeared from our English speech. They seemed to have held their ground in Scotland in considerably larger numbers than in the south of the Island. Thus Campbell employs that very graceful word

‘winsome,’ but would scarcely have done so but for his Scotch breeding, and perhaps even then only in a Scotch ballad.*

Neither can I esteem it a mere accident that of a group of depreciatory and contemptuous words ending in ‘ard,’ at least one-half should have dropped out of use; I allude to that group of which ‘dotard,’ ‘laggard,’ ‘braggard,’ now spelt ‘braggart,’ ‘sluggard,’ ‘wizard,’ may be taken as surviving specimens; ‘blinkard’ (*Homilies*); ‘dizzard’ (Burton); ‘dullard’ (Udal); ‘musard’ (Chaucer); ‘puggard,’ ‘stinkard’ (Ben Jonson), as extinct.

Again, there was once a whole family of words, whereof the greater number are now under ban; which seem at one time to have been formed almost at pleasure, the only condition being that the combination should be a happy one—I mean all those singularly expressive words formed by a combination of verb and substantive, the former governing the latter; as ‘scarecrow,’ ‘telltale,’ ‘scapegrace,’ ‘turncoat,’ ‘turntail,’ ‘skinflint,’ ‘spendthrift,’ ‘lick-spittle,’ ‘daredevil,’ ‘makebate’ (= störenfried), ‘cutpurse,’ ‘cutthroat,’ ‘marplot,’ ‘marprelate.’ These with a certain number of others, have held their ground, and may be said to be still more or less in use; but what a number more are forgotten; and yet, though not always elegant, they constituted a very vigorous portion of our language, and pre-

* Jamieson’s *Dictionary* gives a large number of words with this termination which I should suppose were always peculiar to Scotland, as ‘bangsome,’ *i. e.* quarrelsome, ‘freaksome,’ ‘drysome,’ ‘grousome’ (the German ‘grausam’).

served some of its most genuine idioms. It could not well be otherwise ; they are almost all words of abuse, and the abusive words of a language are always among the most picturesque and vigorous and imaginative which it affords. The whole man speaks out in them, and often the man under the influence of passion and excitement, which always lend force and fire to his speech. Let me remind you of a few of them ; ‘smellfeast,’ if not a better is yet a more graphic, word than our foreign ‘parasite ;’ as graphic indeed for us as *τρεχέδιπνος* to Greek ears ; ‘clawback’ is a stronger, if not a more graceful, word than ‘flatterer’ or ‘sycophant ;’ ‘toss-pot’ (Fuller), or sometimes ‘reelpot’ (Middleton), is a word which tells its own tale as well as drunkard ; and ‘pinchpenny’ (Holland) as well as or better than miser. And then what a multitude more there were in like kind ; ‘spintext,’ ‘lacklatin,’ both applied to ignorant clerics ; ‘bitesheep’ (a favourite word with Foxe) to such of these as were rather wolves tearing, than shepherds feeding, the flock ; ‘slip-string’ (= pendar) to one owed to the gallows (Beaumont and Fletcher).

How many of these words occur in Shakespeare ; the following list makes no pretence to completeness ; ‘martext,’ ‘carrytale,’ ‘pleaseman,’ ‘sneakup,’ ‘mumblenews,’ ‘wantwit,’ ‘lackbrain,’ ‘lackbeard,’ ‘lacklove,’ ‘ticklebrain,’ ‘breedbate’ (the old French ‘attise-feu,’ or ‘attise-querelle’), ‘swinge-buckler,’ ‘pickpurse,’ ‘pickthank,’ ‘picklock,’ ‘break-vow,’ ‘breakpromise ;’ ‘makepeace’—this last being the only one among them all in which reprobation

or contempt does not utter itself. Nor is the list exhausted yet; there are further 'dingthrift' (= prodigal, Herrick), 'wastethrift,' (Beaumont and Fletcher), 'scape-thrift' (Holinshed), 'shakebuckler' (Becon), 'swashbuckler,' 'spitvenom,' 'killjoy,' 'lackland,' 'pickquarrel,' 'cumberworld' (Drayton), 'curryfavor,' 'clutchfist' (Middleton), with others which it will be convenient to omit. 'Rakehell,' which used to be spelt 'rakel' or 'rakle' (Chaucer), a good English word, would be only through an error included in this list, although Cowper, when he writes 'rake-hell' ("*rake-hell* baronet") evidently regarded it as belonging to this group.*

Perhaps one of the most frequent causes which leads to the disuse of words is this: in some inexplicable way there comes to be attached something of ludicrous, or coarse, or vulgar to them, out of a feeling of which they are no longer used in earnest

* The mistake is far earlier: it is clear that at a very early time the sound suggested first this sense, and then this spelling. Thus Stanihurst, *Description of Ireland*, p. 28: "They are taken for no better than *rakehels*, or *the devil's* black guard."—Let me observe before quitting the matter that many languages have groups of words formed upon the same scheme, although, singularly enough, they are altogether absent from the Anglo-Saxon. (J. Grimm, *Deutsche Grammatik*, vol. ii. p. 976). The Spaniards have a great many very expressive words of the sort. Thus with allusion to the great struggle in which Christian Spain was engaged for so many centuries, a vaunting braggart is a 'matamoros,' a 'slaymoor;' he is a 'matasiete,' a 'slayseven;' a 'perdonavidas,' a 'sparelives.' Others may be added to these, as 'azotacalles,' 'picapleytos,' 'rompe-esquinas,' 'ganapan,' 'cascatreguas.'

serious writing, and at the same time fall out of the discourse of those who desire to speak elegantly. Not indeed that this degradation which overtakes words is in all cases inexplicable. The unheroic character of most men's minds, with their consequent intolerance of that heroic which they cannot understand, is constantly at work, and not seldom with success, in taking down words of nobleness from their high pitch; and, as the most effectual way of doing this, in casting an air of mock-heroic about them. Thus 'to dub,' a word resting on one of the noblest usages of chivalry, has now something of ludicrous about it; so too has 'doughty;' they belong to that serio-comic, mock-heroic diction, the multiplication of which, as of all parodies on greatness, is a sign of evil augury for a nation, is a present sign of evil augury for our own.

'Pate' in the sense of 'head' is now comic or ignoble; it was not so once; as is plain from the fact that it occurs in the Prayer Book Version of the Psalms (Ps. vii. 17.) The same may be said of 'sconce,' in this sense at least; of 'nowl' or 'noll,' which Wiclif uses; of 'slops' for trousers (Marlowe's *Lucan*); of 'smug,' which once meant no more than adorned ("the smug bridegroom:" Shakespeare.) 'To nap' in the sense of to slumber lightly is now a word without dignity; while yet in Wiclif's Bible it is said "Lo he schall not *nappe*, nether slepe that kepeth Israel" (Ps. cxxi. 4.) 'To punch,' 'to thump,' both which, and in serious writing, occur in Spenser, could not now obtain the

same use ; nor yet 'to wag.' It is not otherwise in regard of phrases. I remember in the great ballad of *Chevy Chase*, which Sir Philip Sydney declared he could never hear but "it stirred him like a trumpet," a noble warrior whose legs are hewn off, is described as being "in doleful dumps;" just as, in Holland's translation of Livy, the Romans are set forth as being "in the dumps" in consequence of their disastrous defeat at Cannæ. And in the sermons of Barrow, who certainly intended to write an elevated style, and did not seek familiar, still less vulgar, expressions, we yet meet such terms as 'to rate,' 'to snub,' 'to gull,' 'dumpish,' and the like ; which we may confidently affirm were not vulgar when he used them.

Then too the advance of refinement causes words to be foregone, which are felt to speak too plainly. It is not merely here that one age has more delicate ears than another ; this is something ; but besides this, and even if this delicacy were at a standstill, there would still be a continual process going on, by which the words, which for a certain while have been employed to designate coarse or disagreeable facts or things, would be disallowed, or at least relinquished to the lower classes of society, and others assumed in their place. The former by long use being felt to have come into too direct and close relation with that which they designate, to summon it up too distinctly before the mind's eye, they are thereupon exchanged for other words, which, at first at least, indicate more lightly and at a greater distance the offensive

thing, rather hint and suggest than paint and describe it : although by and bye these new will be themselves also probably discarded, and for the same reasons which brought about the dismissal of those which they replaced. It lies in the necessity of things that I must leave this part of my subject without illustration.*

Thus much in respect of the words and the character of the words, which we have lost or let go. In respect of these, if a language, as it travels onward, loses some, it also acquires others, and probably many more than those which it loses ; they are leaves on the tree of language, of which if some fall away, a new succession takes their place. But it is not so, as I already observed, with the *forms* or *powers* of a language, that is, with the various inflexions, moods, duplicate or triplicate formation of tenses ; which those who speak it come gradually to perceive that they can do without, and therefore cease to employ ; seeking to suppress grammatical intricacies, and to obtain grammatical simplicity and so far as possible a pervading uniformity, sometimes even at the hazard of letting go that which had real worth, and contributed to the more lively, if not to the clearer, setting forth of the inner

* As not, however, turning on a *very* coarse matter, and illustrating the subject with infinite wit and humour, I might refer the Spanish scholar to the discussion between Don Quixote and Sancho on the dismissal of 'regoldar,' from the language of good society, and the substitution of 'erutar' in its room. (*Don Quixote*, 4. 7. 43.)

thought of the mind. Here there is only loss, with no compensating gain ; or at least only diminution, never addition. In regard of these inner forces and potencies of a language, there is no creative energy at work in its later periods, in any, indeed, but quite the earliest. They are not as the leaves, but may be likened to the stem and leading branches of a tree, whose shape, mould and direction are determined at a very early period of its growth ; which accident or other causes may diminish, but which can never be increased. I have already slightly alluded to a very illustrious example of this, namely to the dropping of the dual number in the Greek language. When the New Testament was written, it had so fallen out of the common dialect in which that is composed, that, as is probably well known to us all, no single example of it occurs throughout all the writings of the New Covenant. Nor, in respect of this very form, is this an isolated case. There is no dual in the modern German, Danish or Swedish ; in the old German and Norse there was.

How much in this respect for better or for worse *we* have got rid of, I need hardly tell you ; how bare, whether too bare is another question, we have stripped ourselves ; what simplicity reigns in the present English, as compared with the old Anglo-Saxon. That had six declensions, our present English but one ; that had three genders, English, if we except one or two words, has none ; that formed the genitive in a variety of ways, we only in one ; and the same fact meets us, wherever we compare

the grammars of the two languages. At the same time, it can scarcely be repeated too often, that in the estimate of the gain or loss thereupon ensuing, we must by no means put certainly to loss everything which the language has dismissed, any more than everything to gain which it has acquired. It is no real wealth in a language to have needless and superfluous forms. They are often an embarrassment and an encumbrance to it rather than a help. The Finnish language has fourteen cases, but I do not suppose that it can do more, or indeed at all as much, with its fourteen as the Greek is able to do with its five.

And therefore it seems to me that some words of Otfried Müller, in many ways admirable, do yet exaggerate the losses consequent on the reduction of the forms of a language. "It may be observed," he says, "that in the lapse of ages, from the time that the progress of language can be observed, grammatical forms, such as the signs of cases, moods and tenses have never been increased in number, but have been constantly diminishing. The history of the Romance, as well as of the Germanic, languages shows in the clearest manner how a grammar, once powerful and copious, has been gradually weakened and impoverished, until at last it preserves only a few fragments of its ancient inflections. Now there is no doubt that this luxuriance of grammatical forms is not an essential part of a language, considered merely as a vehicle of thought. It is well known that the Chinese language, which is merely a collection of

radical words destitute of grammatical forms, can express even philosophical ideas with tolerable precision ; and the English, which, from the mode of its formation by a mixture of different tongues, has been stripped of its grammatical inflections more completely than any other European language, seems nevertheless, even to a foreigner, to be distinguished by its energetic eloquence. All this must be admitted by every unprejudiced inquirer ; but yet it cannot be overlooked, that this copiousness of grammatical forms, and the fine shades of meaning which they express, evince a nicety of observation, and a faculty of distinguishing, which unquestionably prove that the race of mankind among whom these languages arose was characterized by a remarkable correctness and subtlety of thought. Nor can any modern European, who forms in his mind a lively image of the classical languages in their ancient grammatical luxuriance, and compares them with his mother tongue, conceal from himself that in the ancient languages the words, with their inflections, clothed as it were with muscles and sinews, come forward like living bodies, full of expression and character, while in the modern tongues the words seem shrunk up into mere skeletons.”*

I cannot think but that this is stated too strongly ; however, when my lecture is concluded, you will be able better to judge for yourselves. And here I am sure that you will greatly prefer that I should

* *Literature of Greece*, p. 5.

address myself to the consideration not of forms which the language has relinquished long ago, but mainly to those which it is relinquishing now; such as, touching us more nearly, will have a far more lively interest for us all. Let me then instance one of these. The female termination which we employ in certain words, such as from 'heir' 'heiress,' from 'prophet' 'prophetess,' from 'sorcerer' 'sorceress,' was once far more widely extended than it now is; the words which retain it are daily becoming fewer. It has already fallen away in so many, and is evidently becoming of more unfrequent use in so many others, that, if we may augur of the future from the analogy of the past, it will one day altogether disappear from the language. Thus all these occur in Wiclif's Bible; 'teacheress' as the female teacher (Wisd. viii. 4); 'singeress,' the female singer (2 Chr. iii. 5); 'friendess,' 'servantess,' 'leperess,' 'neighbourness,' 'sinneress' (Luke vii. 37); 'devouress,' 'spoussess' (Prov. v. 19); 'thralless' (Jer. xxxiv. 16); 'dwelleress,' 'waiteress' (Jer. ix. 17.) Add to these 'chideress,' the female chider, 'herdess,' 'constableness,' 'moveress,' 'soudaness' (= sultaness), 'guideress,' 'charmeress' (all in Chaucer); and others, which however we may have now let them fall, reached to far later periods of the language; thus 'pedleress,' 'vassaless,' 'victoreess' (all in Spenser); 'fornicatress' (Shakespeare); 'ministress,' 'flatteress' (both in Holland); 'saintess' (Sir T. Urquhart); 'heroess' (Chapman); 'clientess' (Middleton); 'soldieress,' 'guardianess,' 'votaress' (all in Beaumont and Fletcher); 'comfortress' (Ben

Jonson); 'solicitress,' 'impostress,' 'buildress' (all in Fuller); 'commandress' (Burton); 'monarchess' (Drayton); 'disciplless' (Speed); 'auditress,' 'cateress,' 'tyranness' (all in Milton); 'detractress' (Addison); 'hucksteress' (Howell); 'tutoress' (Shaftesbury); 'farmeress' (Lord Peterborough, *Letter to Pope*); with many more which, I doubt not, might easily be brought together.

Exactly the same thing has happened with another feminine affix, which was once used in a far greater number of words than now. I mean 'ster' in the room of 'er,' to indicate that a noun before applied to the male was now intended to be transferred and applied to the female.* 'Spinner,' taking the feminine form of 'spinster,' furnishes an excellent example of what I mean, and perhaps the only one in which both the forms still remain in use. Formerly however there were a vast number of these; thus 'baker' had 'bakester,' being the female who baked; 'brewer;' 'brewster;' 'reader;' 'readster;' 'seamer;' 'seamster;' 'fruiterer;' 'fruitester;' 'tumbler' 'tumblester' (this and the preceding both in Chaucer); 'knitter' 'knitster' (a word which, I have understood, is still alive in Devon). And further we may observe, and it is a striking example of the richness of a language in forms at the earlier stages of its existence, that not a few of the words which had, as we have just seen, a feminine termination in 'ess,' had also a second feminine of the kind with which we now have to do. Thus

* On this termination see J. Grimm's *Deutsche Gramm.*, vol. ii. 134; vol. iii. 339.

'dancer,' beside 'danceress,' had also 'daunster'; 'chider,' besides 'chideress' had 'chidester' (Chaucer); 'wailer' 'wailster' (Wiclif); 'dweller' 'dwelster,' 'singer' 'songster.'

I know there are some who call into question the assertion just made that the termination 'ster' did once announce invariably a *female* doer. It may be, and indeed has been, urged that the existence of such words as 'seamstress,' 'songstress,' is decisive evidence that the ending 'ster' of itself was not counted sufficient to designate persons as female; for if, it has been said, 'seamster' and 'songster' had been felt to be already feminine, no one would have ever thought of doubling on this, and adding a second female termination; 'seamstress,' 'songstress.' But all which can justly be concluded from hence is, that when this final 'ess' was added to these already feminine forms, and examples of it will not, I think, be found till a very late period of the language, the true principle and law of the words had been lost sight of and forgotten.* The same may be said in respect of such other of these feminine forms as are now applied to men, such

* The earliest example which Richardson gives of 'seamstress' is from Gay, of 'songstress,' from Thomson. It is quite certain that as late as Ben Jonson, 'seamster' and 'songster' expressed the *female* seamer and singer; a single passage from his *Masque of Christmas* is evidence to this. One of the children of Christmas there is "Wassel, like a neat *sempster* and *songster*; *her* page bearing a brown bowl." Compare a passage from *Holland's Leaguer*, 1632: "A tyre-woman of phantastical ornaments, a *sempster* for ruffles, cuffles, smocks and waistcoats."

as 'gamester,' 'youngster,' 'huckster,' 'punster,' 'teamster,' 'tapster.' Either like 'teamster,' and perhaps 'gamester,' the words first came into existence and assumed this form, when the true significance of the form was altogether lost;* or like 'tapster,' which is female in Chaucer ('the gay *tapstere*'), or 'bakester,' at this day used in Scotland for 'baker,' the word did originally belong of right and exclusively to women; but with the gradual transfer of the occupation to men, joined to an increasing forgetfulness of what this termination implied, there has been also a transfer of the name;† just as in other words, and out of the same causes, exactly the converse has found place; and 'baker' or

* This was about the time of Henry VIII. In proof of the confusion which reigned on the subject in Shakespeare's time, see his use of 'spinster' as = 'spinner,' the *man* spinning, *Henry VIII.* i. 2; and I have no doubt that it is the same at *Othello*, i. 1. And a little later in Howell's *Vocabulary*, 1659, 'spinner' and 'spinster' are both referred to the male sex, and the barbarous 'spinstress' invented for the female. The first example of 'youngster' which Richardson gives is from the *Spectator*. If it exists at all in our earlier literature, it will hardly be otherwise than as the female correlative of the male 'younker,' or 'yonker,' a word of constant recurrence.

† I have included 'huckster,' as will be observed, in this list. I certainly cannot produce any passage in which it is employed as the *female* pedler. We have only, however, to keep in mind the existence of the verb 'to huck,' in the sense of to peddle (it is used by Bishop Andrews), and at the same time not to let the present spelling of 'hawker' mislead us, and we shall confidently recognize 'hucker' (the German 'höker' or 'höcker'), in 'hawker,' that is, the *man* who 'hucks,' 'hawks' or peddles, as in 'huckster' the *female*

'brewer,' not 'bakester' or 'brewster,' would be now in England applied to the female baking or brewing. So entirely has this power of the language now been foregone, that it cannot be said *really* to survive even in 'spinner' and 'spinster,' which I adduced just now as the only words in which formally it continued ; seeing that 'spinster' has now been transferred to quite another meaning than that of a female spinning, whom, as well as the male, we should designate not as a 'spinster,' but a 'spinner.'

Let me take the opportunity of observing here, by way of confirmation of what has just been asserted, that it is almost incredible, if we had not experience of the fact, how soon the true rationale and significance of some form which has never ceased to be in everybody's mouth, may be wholly lost sight of. No more curious chapter in the history of language could be written than one which should trace the violations of analogy, the transgressions of the most primary laws of a language, which often follow hereupon ; the plurals like 'welkin' (= wolken, the clouds), which are dealt with as singulars, singulars like 'riches' (richesse), which are dealt with as plurals. But there is one example of this, familiar to us all ; probably so familiar that it would not be worth while adverting to it, if it did not illustrate, as no other word could,

who does the same. When therefore Howell and others employ 'hucksteress,' they fall into the same barbarous excess of expression, whereof we are all guilty, when we use 'seamstress' and 'songstress.'

this forgetfulness which may overtake a whole people in regard of the true meaning of a grammatical form they have never ceased to employ. I allude to the mistaken assumption that the 's' of the genitive, as 'the king's countenance', was merely a more rapid way of pronouncing 'the king *his* countenance,' and that the final 's' in 'king's' was in fact an elided 'his.' This explanation for a long time prevailed almost universally; I believe there are many who accept it still.

It was in vain that here and there a deeper knower of our tongue protested against this "monstrous syntax," as Ben Jonson in his *Grammar* justly calls it. It was in vain that Wallis, another English scholar of the 17th century, pointed out in *his* grammar that the slightest examination of the facts showed how absurd and untenable this explanation was, seeing that we do not merely say 'the *king's* countenance,' but 'the *queen's* countenance;' and in this case the final 's' cannot stand for 'his,' for 'the queen *his* countenance' cannot be intended;* we do not say merely 'the *child's* bread,' but 'the *children's* bread,' where it is no less impossible to resolve the phrase into 'the children *his* bread.'† Despite of these protests the

* Even this does not startle Addison, or cause him any misgiving; on the contrary he boldly asserts, (*Spectator*, No. 135), "The same single letter *s* on many occasions does the office of a whole word, and represents the *his* or *her* of our forefathers."

† Nothing can be better than the way in which Wallis disposes of this scheme, although he is not so successful in showing what the 's' does mean as in showing what it cannot

error held its ground. It seems to have begun early in the sixteenth century; you can hardly open a book printed during the seventeenth, or the early decades of the eighteenth, but you will find often this 's' in the actual printing spread out into 'his.' The books of scholars are not a whit more exempt from the mistake than those of others. Spenser, Fuller, Donne, Jeremy Taylor are all guilty of it. It finds place in Dryden, who more than once helps out his verse with an additional syllable gained by its aid. It has even forced its way into our Prayer Book itself, where in the "Prayer for all sorts and conditions of men," added at the last revision of the Liturgy in 1661, and I believe by Bishop Sanderson, we are bidden to say, "And this we beg for Jesus Christ *his* sake."* I

mean (*Gramm. Ling. Anglic.* c. 5): Qui autem arbitrantur illud s, loco *his* adjunctum esse (priori scilicet parte per aphæresim abscissâ), ideoque apostrophî notam semper vel pingendam esse, vel saltem subintelligendam, omnino errant. Quamvis enim non negem quin apostrophî nota commode nonnunquam affigi possit, ut ipsius litteræ s usus distinctius, ubi opus est, percipiatur; ita tamen semper fieri debere, aut etiam ideo fieri quia vocem *his* innuat, omnino nego. Adjungitur enim et fœminarum nominibus propriis, et substantivis pluralibus, ubi vox *his* sine solœcismo locum habere non potest: atque etiam in possessivis *ours*, *yours*, *theirs*, *hers*, ubi vocem *his* innui nemo somniaret.

* I cannot think that it would exceed the authority of our University Presses, if so palpable and offensive an ungrammatical form were removed from the Prayer Books which they put forth, as I have no doubt that it is suppress by many of the clergy in the reading. They would be only using here a liberty which they have already assumed in the case of the

need hardly tell you that this 's' is in fact the one remnant of flexion surviving in the singular number of our English noun substantives; it is the sign of the genitive, and just as in Latin 'lapis' makes 'lapidis' in the genitive, so 'king,' 'queen,' 'child,' make severally 'king's,' 'queen's,' 'child's,' the comma, an apparent note of elision, being a mere modern expedient to distinguish the genitive singular from the plural cases.

But to return. We may further notice as another example of this tendency to dispense with inflection, of this endeavour on the part of the speakers of a language to reduce its forms to the fewest possible, consistent with the accurate communication of their thoughts to one another, that of our adjectives in 'en,' formed on substantives, and denoting the material or substance of which anything is made, some have gone, others are going, out of use; while we content ourselves with the bare juxtaposition of the substantive itself, as sufficiently expressing our meaning. Thus instead of 'golden pin' we say 'gold pin;' instead of 'earthen works' we say 'earth works.' It is true that in the case of these two adjectives, 'golden' and 'earthen,' they still belong to our living speech, though

Bible. In all earlier editions of the authorized Version it stood originally at 1 Kin. xv. 24: "Nevertheless *Asa his* heart was perfect with the Lord;" it is "*Asa's* heart" now. In the same way "*Mordecai his* matters" (Esth. iii. 4) has been silently changed into "*Mordecai's* matters;" and in some modern editions, but not in all, "*Holofernes his* head" (Judith xiii. 9) into "*Holofernes'* head."

mainly as part of our poetic diction, or of the solemn and thus stereotyped language of Scripture. Others however of these adjectives have become obsolete, and have nearly or quite disappeared from the language, although the epochs of their disappearance are very different. 'Rosen' went early; I know no later example of it than in Chaucer ('*rosen* chapelet'). 'Silvern' was originally in Wiclif's Bible, but already in the second recension of it was exchanged for 'silver' ("*silverne* housis to Diane," Acts 19). In the coarse polemics of the Reformation the phrase '*breaden* god,' provoked by the Romish doctrine of transubstantiation, was of frequent employment, and occurs as late as Oldham; '*cedarn* alley' in Milton; '*boxen* leaves,' where we should use '*box* leaves,' in Dryden; '*a treen* cup' in Jeremy Taylor; '*a glassen* breast,' meaning a transparent one, in Whitlock's *Zootomia*, 1654.

It is true that a good number of these adjectives in 'en' still hold their ground; yet the roots which sustain even these we may note on closer observation as being gradually cut away from beneath them. Thus 'brazen' may at first sight seem as strongly established in the language as ever; yet it is very far from so being; the preparations for its disappearance are already vigorously at work. Even now it only lives in a tropical and secondary sense, as '*a brazen* face,' or if in a literal sense, it is only, as was said of others, in poetic diction or in the consecrated language of Scripture, as '*the brazen* serpent;' otherwise we say '*a brass* farthing,'

‘a *brass* candlestick.’ It is the same with ‘oaten,’ ‘oaken,’ ‘birchen,’ ‘beechen,’ ‘strawen’ and many more ; and the manifest tendency of the language is, as it has long been, to rid itself of these, and to satisfy itself with an adjectival use of the substantive in their stead.

Let me illustrate by another example that which I am now seeking especially to press on your notice, namely, that a language, as it travels onward, simplifies itself, approaches more and more to a grammatical and logical uniformity, seeks to do the same thing always in the same manner ; where it has two or three ways of conducting a single operation, lets all of them go but one ; and in these ways becomes no doubt easier to be mastered, more handy, more manageable ; but at the same time is in danger of forfeiting elements of strength, variety and beauty, which it once possessed. My present example is this ; the tendency of our verbs to let go their strong præterites, and to substitute weak ones in their room ; or, where they have two or three præterites, to retain only one of them, and that invariably the weak one. Though many of us no doubt are familiar with the terms, ‘strong’ and ‘weak’ præterites, which in all our better grammars have put out of use the wholly misleading terms, ‘irregular’ and ‘regular,’ I perhaps had better remind you of what the exact meaning of the terms is. A strong præterite is one formed by an internal vowel change ; for instance the verb ‘to *drive*’ forms the præterite ‘*drove*’ by an internal change of the vowel ‘i’ into ‘o.’ But why, it may be asked, called

‘strong’? In respect that there is enough of vigour and indwelling energy in the word to form its past tense from its own resources, and with no calling in of help from without. On the other hand ‘to lift’ forms its præterite ‘lifted,’ not by any internal change, but by the addition of ‘ed;’ ‘to grieve’ has ‘grieved.’ Here are weak tenses; as strength was ascribed to the other verbs, so weakness to these; being only able to form their præterites by external aid and addition. You will at once perceive that these strong præterites, while they testify to a vital energy in the words which are able to put them forth, do also, as is the confession of all who have studied the matter, contribute much to the variety and charm of a language.*

The matter however to which I would call your especial attention is, that these are becoming fewer in our language every day; a vast number of them *have* disappeared, have gradually fallen quite out of use, while others are in the act of so falling. Nor is there any compensating process on the other hand; the power of forming new strong præterites is long ago extinct; probably no new verb which has come into the language since the Conquest has developed this power, while multitudes have let it go. Let me mention a few which have disappeared. Thus ‘shape’

* J. Grimm (*Deutsche Gramm.* vol. i. p. 1040): Dass die starke form die ältere, kräftigere, innere; die schwache die spätere, gehemmtere und mehr äusserliche sey, leuchtet ein. Elsewhere, speaking generally of inflexions by internal vowel change, he characterizes them as a ‘chief beauty’ (haupt-schönheit) of the Teutonic languages.

has now a weak præterite, 'shaped,' it had once a strong one, 'shope;' 'to bake' has now a weak præterite, 'baked,' it had once a strong one, 'boke;' the præterite of 'glide' is now 'glided,' it was once 'glode' or 'glid;' 'help' makes now 'helped,' it made once 'halp' and 'holp.' 'Creep' made 'crope,' still current in the north of England; 'weep' 'wope' (Chaucer); 'seethe' 'soth' or 'sod' ("Jacob *sod* pottage," Gen. xxv. 29); in each of these cases the strong præterite has given way to the weak. It is the same with 'sheer,' which once made 'shore;' as 'leap' made 'lope;' 'wash' 'wische' (Chaucer); 'delve' 'dalf' and 'dolve;' 'wax' 'wex' and 'wox;' 'laugh' 'leugh;' with innumerable others.*

We again recognize in this which has just been noted, the limits and restraints which a language gradually imposes on its own freedom of action. We may observe further, while on this matter of strong præterites, for it bears directly on our subject, that where verbs have not actually renounced these their strong præterites, and contented themselves with weak ones in their room, yet having once two,

* As a marvellous example of the entire ignorance as to the past historic evolution of the language with which it has been often undertaken to write about it, I may mention that the author of the *Observations upon the English Language*, referred to already, treats all these strong præterites as of recent introduction, counting 'knew' to have lately expelled 'knowed,' 'rose' to have acted the same part toward 'rised,' and of course esteeming them as so many barbarous violations of the laws of the language; and concluding with the warning that "great care must be taken to prevent their increase."

p. 24.

or, it might be three of these strong, they now have only one. The others, on the principle of dismissing whatever can be dismissed, they have let go. Thus 'chide' had once 'chid' and 'chode,' but though 'chode' is in our Bibles (Gen. xxxi. 36), it has not maintained itself in our speech; 'sling' had 'slung' and 'slang' (1 Sam. xvii. 49); only 'slung' remains; 'fling' had once 'flung' and 'flang'; 'tread' had 'trod' and 'trad'; 'give' had 'gave' and 'gove'; 'lead' had 'led,' 'lad' and 'lode'; 'write' had 'wrote,' 'writ' and 'wrate'; in each of these cases, and they might easily be multiplied, only the præterite which I have named the first remains in use.

Nor should you fail to observe that wherever there is at the present time a conflict going on between weak and strong forms, which shall remain in use, as there is in several verbs, in every instance the battle is not to the strong; on the contrary the weak is carrying the day, is gradually putting the other out of use. Thus 'climbed' is getting the upper hand of 'clomb,' as the past tense of 'to climb; 'swelled' of 'swoll; 'hanged' of 'hung.' It is not too much to anticipate that a time will arrive, although it may be centuries distant, when all the verbs in the English language will form their præterites weakly; not without a considerable loss of the fullness and energy which in this respect the language even now displays, and once far more eminently displayed.*

* J. Grimm (*Deutsche Gramm.* vol. i. p. 839): Die starke flexion stufenweise versinkt und austirbt, die schwache aber um sich greift. Cf. i. 994, 1040; ii. 5; iv. 509.

Once more—the entire dropping of ‘thou,’ except in poetry or in addresses to the Deity, and as a necessary consequence, the dropping also of the second singular of the verb with its strongly marked flexion, as ‘lovest,’ ‘lovedst,’ is another example of a force once existing in the language, which has been, or is being, allowed to expire. In the seventeenth century it was with ‘thou’ in English as it is still with ‘du’ in German, with ‘tu’ in French; being as it then was, the sign of familiarity, whether that familiarity were of love, or of contempt and scorn.*

It was not unfrequently the latter. Thus at Sir Walter Raleigh’s trial (1603), Coke, when argument and evidence failed him, insulted the defendant by applying to him the term ‘thou’ :—“All that Lord Cobham did was at *thy* instigation, *thou* viper! for I *thou* thee, *thou* traitor.” And when Sir Toby Belch in *Twelfth Night* is urging Sir Andrew Aguecheek to send a sufficiently provocative challenge to Viola, he suggests to him that he “taunt him with the licence of ink; if thou *thou’st* him some thrice, it shall not be amiss.” To keep this in mind will throw considerable light on one early peculiarity of the Quakers, and give a certain dignity to it, as once maintained, which at present it is very far from possessing. We shall see that however unnecessary and unwise their determination to ‘thee’ and ‘thou’ the whole world was, yet

* Thus Wallis (*Grammatica Linguae Anglicanae*, 1653):
Singulari numero siquis alium compellet, vel dedignantis
illud esse solet, vel familiariter blandientis.

this had a significance ; it was not, as now it seems to us to be, and through the silent changes which language has undergone, as now it indeed is, an unmeaning departure from the ordinary usage of society, but meant something. Right or wrong, it had an ethical motive, being an assertion upon their parts, however misplaced, that they would not have high or great or rich men's persons in admiration. And it was one which cost them something ; at present we can very little understand the amount of courage which this 'thou-ing' and 'thee-ing' of all men must have demanded on their parts, nor yet the amount of indignation and offence which it stirred up in them who were not aware of, or would not allow for, the scruples which induced them to it.* It is however in its other aspect that we must chiefly regret the dying out of the use of 'thou'—that is, as the voice of peculiar intimacy and special affection, as between husband and wife, parents and children, and such other as are knit together by bands of more than common affection.

But the boldest step which in this direction of simplification the English language has made, is

* What the actual position of the compellation 'thou' was at that time, we may perhaps best learn from this passage in Fuller's *Church History, Dedication of Book vii.*: "In opposition whereunto [*i. e.* to the Quaker usage] we maintain that *thou* from superiors to inferiors is proper, as a sign of command ; from equals to equals is passable, as a note of familiarity ; but from inferiors to superiors, if proceeding from ignorance, hath a smack of clownishness ; if from affectation, a tone of contempt."

the renouncing of the distribution of its nouns into masculine, feminine and neuter, or even into masculine and feminine, as in French, and with this, as a necessary consequence, the dropping of any flexional modification in the adjectives connected with them. Natural *sex* of course remains, being inherent in all language ; but grammatical *gender*, with the exception of 'he' 'she' and 'it,' and perhaps one or two other fragmentary instances, the language has altogether foregone. An example will make clear the distinction between these. When I use the word 'poetess,' it is not the word 'poetess' which is *feminine*, but the person indicated by the word who is *female*. So too 'daughter,' 'queen,' are in English not *feminine* nouns, but nouns designating *female* persons. Take on the contrary 'filia' or 'regina,' 'fille' or 'reine,' there you have *feminine* nouns as well as *female* persons. I need hardly say to you that we did not inherit this simplicity from others, but made it like the Danes, in so far as they have done the like, for ourselves. Whether we turn to the Latin, or, which is for us more important, to the old German, we find gender ; and in the four daughter languages which have descended from the Latin, in most of those which have descended from the old Teutonic stock, it is fully established to the present day. The practical business-like character of the English mind asserted itself in the rejection of a distinction, which in the great multitude of words, that is, in all having to do with inanimate things, and as such incapable of sex, rested upon a fiction, and

had no ground in the real nature of things. It is only by an act and effort of the imagination that sex, and thus gender, can be attributed to a table, a ship, and tree ; and there are aspects, this is an example, in which the English is one of the least imaginative of all languages, even while it has been employed in some of the greatest works of imagination which the world has ever seen.

LECTURE IV.

ON CHANGES IN THE MEANING OF ENGLISH
WORDS.

I PROPOSE, according to the plan which I sketched out in my first lecture, to take for the subject of my present one the changes which in the course of time have found place, or now are finding place, in the meaning of many among our English words ; so that, whether we are aware of it or not, we employ them at this day in senses very different from those in which our forefathers employed them of old. You observe, it is not *obsolete* words, it is not words which have quite fallen out of present use that I propose to consider—words rather, still on the lips of men, but with meanings more or less removed from those which once they had. My subject is far more practical, you will feel it to have far more to do with your actual life, than if I had taken obsolete words and considered them. These last have an interest indeed, but it is an interest somewhat of an antiquarian character. Such words were a part of the intellectual money with which our ancestors carried on their affairs, but now they are rather medals for the cabinets and collections of the curious than current money for the needs and pleasures of all. Their wings are clipped, so that they are “winged

words" (ἔπεα πτερόεντα) no more ; the spark of thought, kindling from mind to mind, no longer runs along them, as along the electric wires of the soul.

And then, besides this, there is little or no danger that any should be misled by these. A reader lights for the first time on one of these obsolete English words, 'frampold,' or 'garboil,' or 'brangle;' he is at once conscious of his ignorance ; he has recourse to a glossary, or if he guesses from the context at the word's signification, still his guess is as a guess to him, and no more. But words that have changed their meaning have often a deceivableness about them, so that he never doubts but that he knows their intention, that they possess for him the same force which they possessed for their writer, and conveyed to *his* contemporaries, when indeed it is altogether otherwise.

Let me illustrate this by examples. A reader of our day lights upon such a passage as the following (it is in the *Preface* to Howell's *Lexicon*, 1660): "Though the root of the English language be *Dutch*, yet it may be said to have been inoculated afterwards on a French stock." He may know that the Dutch is a sister language or dialect to ours ; but this that it is the mother or root of it will certainly perplex him, and he will hardly know what to make of it ; perhaps he ascribes it to an error in his author, who is thereby unduly lowered in his esteem. But presently in the course of his reading he meets with the following statement, this time in Fuller's *Holy War*: "The French, *Dutch*, Italian, and English were the four elemental nations,

whereof this army [of the Crusaders] was compounded." If the student has sufficient historical knowledge to know that in the time of the Crusades there were no Dutch in our use of the word, this statement would merely startle him ; and probably before he had finished the chapter, having his attention once roused, he would perceive that Fuller with the writers of his time used 'Dutch' for German ; even as it was constantly so used up to the end of the seventeenth century ; what we call now a Dutchman being then a Hollander. But it would be very possible for a young student not to have that amount of previous knowledge which should cause him to receive this announcement with misgiving and surprise ; and thus he might carry away altogether a wrong impression, and rise from a perusal of the book, persuaded that the Dutch, as we call them, played an important part in the Crusades, while the Germans had little or nothing to do with them.

And as it is here with an historic fact, so still more often will it happen with the subtler changes which words have undergone, conveying now much more blame and condemnation, or conveying now much less than formerly ; or of a different kind ; and a reader not aware of the changes which have taken place, may be in continual danger of misreading his author, of misunderstanding his intention, while he has no doubt whatever that he is perfectly apprehending and taking it in. Thus when Shakespeare in *Henry VI.* makes the noble Talbot address Joan of Arc as a 'miscreant,' how coarse a piece of invective does this sound ; how

unlike to that which the chivalrous soldier would have uttered ; or to that which Shakespeare, even with his unworthy estimate of the noble warrior Maid, would have put into Talbot's mouth. But a 'miscreant' in Shakespeare's time had nothing of the meaning which now it has. A 'miscreant,' in agreement with its etymology, was a misbeliever, one who did not believe rightly the articles of the Catholic Faith. And I need not tell you that this was the constant charge which the English brought against Joan,—namely, that she was a dealer in hidden magical arts, a witch, and as such, had fallen from the faith. It is this which Talbot means when he calls her a 'miscreant,' and not what we should intend by the name.

And in reading of poetry especially what forces through this ignorance are often lost, what emphasis passes unobserved, how often the poet may be wronged in our estimation ; that seeming to us now flat and pointless, which at once would lose this character, did we know how to read into some word the power and peculiar force which it once had, but which now has departed from it. For example, Milton ascribes in *Comus* the '*tinsel-slippered* feet' to Thetis, the goddess of the sea. '*Tinsel-slippered*,' how comparatively poor an epithet it sounds for those who know of 'tinsel' only in its modern acceptation, as mean and tawdry finery, affecting a splendor which it does not really possess. But learn its earlier use by learning its derivation, bring it back to the French '*étincelle*,' and the Latin '*scintillula*,' see in it, as Milton and the

writers of his time saw, 'the sparkling,' and how exquisitely beautiful a title does this become applied to a goddess of the sea; how vividly does it call up before our mind's eye the quick glitter and sparkle of the waves under the light of sun or moon. It is Homer's 'silver-footed' (*ἀργυρόπεζα*), not servilely transferred, but reproduced and made his own by the English poet, dealing as one great poet will do with another; who will not disdain to borrow, but to what he borrows will add a further grace of his own.

Or, again, do we keep in mind, or are we even aware, that whenever the word 'influence' occurs in our English poetry, down to comparatively a modern date, there is always more or less remote allusion to the skyey, planetary influences supposed to be exercised by the heavenly luminaries upon men? How many a passage starts into new life and beauty and fulness of allusion, when this is present with us; even Milton's

"store of ladies, whose bright eyes

Rain influence,"

as spectators of the tournament, gain something; when we regard them—and using this language, he intended we should—as the luminaries of this lower sphere, shedding by their propitious presence strength and valour into the hearts of their knights.

It will often happen, as in this last instance, that although we do not fall into any actual misunderstanding, and although the word even in its present acceptation yields a convenient and even a correct sense, still through ignorance of its past

history and of the force which it once possessed; we shall miss a great part of its significance. Let me illustrate this by one further example. A cowardly braggart of a soldier is made in one of Beaumont and Fletcher's plays* to describe the treatment he experienced, when like Parolles he was at length found out, and stripped of his lion's skin :—"They hung me up by the heels and beat me with hazel sticks, . . . that the whole kingdom took notice of me for a *baffled* whipped fellow." The word to which I wish here to call your attention is 'baffled.' Probably if you were reading, there would be nothing here to cause you to pause; you would attach to the word the meaning which sorts very well with the context—"hung up by the heels and beaten, all his schemes of being thought much of were *baffled* and defeated." But the word means a great deal more than this; it contains allusion to a custom in the days of chivalry, according to which a perjured or recreant knight was either in person, or more commonly in effigy, hung up by the heels, his scutcheon blotted, his spear broken, and he himself or his effigy made the mark and subject of all kinds of indignities; such a one being said to be 'baffled'.† Twice in Spenser recreant knights are so dealt with. I can only quote a portion of the shorter passage, in which this infamous punishment is described :

* *A King and no King*, iii. 1.

† See Holinshed's *Chronicles*, vol. iii. pp. 827, 1218: Ann. 1513, 1570.

“And after all, for greater infamy
He by the heels him hung upon a tree,
And *baffled* so, that all which passed by
The picture of his punishment might see.”*

Probably when Beaumont and Fletcher wrote, men were not so remote from the days of chivalry but that this custom was still fresh in their minds. How much more to them than to us, so long as we are ignorant of the same, would those words I just quoted have conveyed?

There are several places in the authorized Version of Scripture, where those who are not aware of the changes which having taken place during the last two hundred and fifty years in our language, can hardly fail of being to a certain extent misled as to the intention of our translators; or, if they are better acquainted with Greek than with early English, will be tempted to ascribe to these translators, though wrongly, an inexact rendering of the original. When for instance St. Paul teaches that if any widow hath children or ‘nephews,’ she is not to be chargeable to the Church, but these are to requite their parents, and to support them (1 Tim. v. 4), it must seem strange that ‘nephews’ should be here brought in; while a reference to the original makes manifest that the difficulty is not there, but in our Version. From this also it is removed, so soon as we know that ‘nephews,’ like the Latin ‘nepotes,’ meant at the time when this Version was made, grandchildren and other lineal descendants; being so employed by Hooker, by

* *Fairy Queen*, 6. 7. 27; cf. 5, 3. 37.

Shakespeare, and by the other writers of the Elizabethian period.

In another place, in the Acts of the Apostles, St. Luke says, "We took up our *carriages* and went up to Jerusalem." (xxi. 15). How was this possible, exclaims a modern objector, when there is nothing but a mountain track, impassable for wheels, between Cæsarea, the place from which Paul and his company started, and Jerusalem? He would not have made this difficulty, if he had known that in our early English 'carriages' did not mean, things which carried us, but things which we carried;* and "we took up our *carriages*" implies no more than "we took up our baggage," or "we trussed up our fardels," as an earlier translation somewhat familiarly has it, and so "went up to Jerusalem."

But a passage in which the altered meaning of a word involves sometimes a more serious misunderstanding is that well known statement of St. James, "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction." "There," exclaims one who wishes to set up St. James against St. Paul, that so he may escape the necessity of obeying either, "listen to what St. James says; he does not speak of faith in Christ as the condition necessary to salvation; there is nothing mystical in what he

* Thus in North's *Plutarch*, p. 470: "Spartacus charged his [Lentulus'] lieutenants that led the army, gave them battle, overthrew them, and took all their *carriage* [*τὴν ἀποσκευὴν ἅπασαν*]."

requires; instead of harping on faith, he makes all religion to consist in practical deeds of kindness one to another." But let us pause a moment. Did 'religion,' when our translation was made, mean godliness? did it mean the *sum total* of our duties towards God? for of course no one would deny that deeds of kindness are a part of our Christian duty, an evidence of the faith which is in us. There is abundant evidence to shew that 'religion' did not mean this; that, like the Greek *θρησκεία*, for which it here stands, like the Latin 'religio,' it meant the outward forms and embodiments in which the inward principle of piety arrayed itself, the external service of God: and St. James is urging upon those to whom he is writing something of this kind:—"instead of the ceremonial services of the Jews, which consisted in divers washings and in other elements of this world, let our service, our *θρησκεία*, take a nobler shape, let it consist in deeds of pity and of love"—and it was this which our translators intended, when they used 'religion' here and 'religious' in the verse preceding. How little 'religion' once meant godliness, how predominantly it was used for the outward service of God, is plain from many passages in our *Homilies*, and from other cotemporary literature.

Again, there is a passage in our Liturgy which I have no doubt is commonly misunderstood. The mistake involves no serious error; yet still in our own language, and in words which we have constantly in our mouths, and at such solemn times, it is certainly better to be right than wrong. You

know that in the Litany we pray to God that it would please Him "to give and preserve to our use the *kindly* fruits of the earth ;"—"the *kindly* fruits,"—what meaning do we attach to this epithet? probably we take it as, those fruits in which the *kindness* and bounty of God or of nature towards us finds its expression. This is no unworthy explanation of the word, but still it is not the right one. The "*kindly* fruits" are the "*natural* fruits," those which the earth according to its kind should naturally bring forth, which it is appointed to produce. To shew you how little 'kindly' meant once benignant, as it means now, I will instance an employment of it from Sir Thomas More's *Life of Richard the Third*. He tells us that Richard calculated by murdering his two nephews in the Tower to make himself accounted "a *kindly* king"—not certainly a 'kindly' one in our present meaning of the word; but, having put them out of the way, that he should then be lineal heir of the Crown, and should thus be reckoned as king *by kind* or natural descent; and such was of old the constant use of the word.

There is another passage in one of our occasional Services, which sometimes offends those who are unacquainted with the early uses of English words, and thus with the intention of the actual framers of that Service. I mean the words in our Marriage Service, "with my body I thee *worship*." Clearly in our modern sense of 'worship,' this language would be unjustifiable. But 'worship' or 'worthship' meant 'honour' in our early English, and

‘to worship’ to honour, this meaning of ‘worship’ still surviving in the title of “your worship,” addressed to the magistrate on the bench. So little was it restrained of old to the honour which man is bound to pay to God, that it was employed by Wiclif to express the honour which God will render to his faithful servants and friends. Thus the words of our Lord, “If any man serve me, him will my Father honour,” these in Wiclif’s translation read thus: “If any man serve me, my Father shall *worship* him.” I do not say that there is not sufficient reason to change the words, “with my body I thee *worship*,” if only there were any means of changing anything which is now antiquated and out of date in our services or arrangements. I think it would be very well if they were changed, liable as they are to misunderstanding and misconstruction now; but still they did not mean at the first, and therefore now do not really mean, any more than, “with my body I thee *honour*,” and so you may answer any fault-finder here.

Take another example of a very easy misapprehension, although not now from Scripture or the Prayer Book. Fuller, our Church Historian, having occasion to speak of some famous divine that had lately died, exclaims, “Oh the *painfulness* of his preaching!” We might assume at first hearing, and if we did not know the former uses of ‘painfulness,’ that this was an exclamation wrung out at the recollection of the tediousness which he inflicted on his hearers. Far from it; the words are a record not of the *pain* which he caused to others,

but of the *pains* which he bestowed himself: and, I believe, if we had more ‘painful’ preachers in the old sense of the word, that is, who *took* pains themselves, we should have fewer ‘painful’ ones in the modern sense, who *cause* pain to their hearers. So too Bishop Grossthead is recorded as “the *painful* writer of two hundred books”—not meaning hereby that these books were painful in the reading, but that he was laborious and painful in their composing.

In other places unacquaintance with the changes in a word’s usage will leave you nearly or altogether at a loss in respect of the intention of an author whom you may be reading. It is evident that he has a meaning, but what it is you are unable to divine, even though all the words he employs are words in familiar employment to the present day. Take an example. The poet Waller is congratulating Charles the Second on his return from exile, and is describing the way in which all men, even those formerly most hostile to him, were now seeking his favor, and he writes :

“Offenders now, the chiefest, do begin
To strive for grace and expiate their sin;
All winds blow fair that did the world embroil,
And *vipers treacle yield*, and scorpions oil.”

Many a reader before now has felt, as I cannot doubt, a moment’s perplexity at the courtly poet’s assertion that “*vipers treacle yield*”—who yet has been too indolent, or who has not had the opportunity, to search out what his meaning might be. There is in fact allusion here to a very curious piece of legendary lore. ‘Treacle,’ or ‘triacle,’ as

Chaucer wrote it,* was originally a Greek word, and wrapped up in itself the once popular belief (an anticipation by the way of homœopathy), that a confection of the viper's flesh was the most potent antidote against the viper's bite.† Waller goes back to this the word's old meaning, familiar enough in his time, for Milton speaks of "the sovran *treacle* of sound doctrine," and Chaucer more solemnly still :

"Christ, which that is to every harm *triacle*;"

while "Venice treacle" was a common name for a supposed antidote against all poisons ; and he would imply that regicides themselves began to be loyal, vipers not now yielding hurt any more, but rather healing for the old hurts which they had inflicted. To trace the word down to its present use, I would observe that, expressing first this antidote, it then came to express any antidote, then any medicinal confection or sweet syrup ; and lastly that particular syrup, namely, the sweet syrup of molasses, to which alone it is now restricted.

Or, to take one more example in the same kind ; and for this I will again draw upon the writings of Fuller. In his *Holy War*, a history of the Crusades, having enumerated the rabble rout of fugitive debtors, runaway slaves, thieves, murderers,

* *Θηριακή*, from *θηρίον*, the name given to the viper, see Acts xxviii. 4. 'Theriac' is only the more rigid form of the same word, the scholarly, as distinguished from the popular, adoption of it.

† Augustine (*Con. duas Epp. Pelag.* iii. 7): Sicut fieri consuevit antidotum etiam de serpentibus contra venena serpentum.

adulterers, who swelled the ranks and helped to make up the army of the Crusaders, he exclaims upon this, "A lamentable case, that the devil's *black guard* should be God's soldiers!" What does he mean, we may ask, by "the devil's *black guard*"? Nor is this the only passage where the phrase, "the black guard," occurs. On the contrary, it is of very frequent recurrence in the early dramatists and others down to the time of Dryden; who gives as one of his stage directions in *Don Sebastian*, "Enter the captain of the rabble, with the *Black guard*." What is this 'black guard'? Has it any connexion with a word of our homeliest vernacular? We feel that probably it has so; yet at first sight the connexion is not very apparent, nor indeed what the exact force of the phrase is. Let me trace its history. In old times, when a royal progress was made, that is when the court moved from one palace to another, or the great nobility from one residence to another, these palaces and these seats of our nobles not being so well and completely furnished as at the present day, it was customary that at such a removal, all kitchen utensils, pots and pans, and even coals, should be also carried with them where they went. Those who accompanied and escorted these, the lowest, meanest, and dirtiest of the retainers, were called 'the black guard';* then any troop or company of ragamuffins;

* "A slave that within this twenty years rode with the *black guard* in the Duke's carriage, 'mongst spits and dripping pans." (Webster's *White Devil*.) Another illustration here of what was just asserted, p. 134, of the word 'carriage.'

and lastly, when the origin of the word was lost sight of, and it was forgotten that it properly implied a company, a rabble rout, and not a single person, one would compliment another, not as belonging to, but as himself being, the 'blackguard.'

The examples which I have adduced are, I am persuaded, sufficient to prove that it is not a useless and unprofitable study, nor yet one altogether without entertainment, to which I invite you ; that on the contrary any one who desires to read with accuracy, and thus with advantage and pleasure, our earlier classics, who would avoid continual misapprehension in their perusal, and would not often fall short of, and often go astray from, their meaning, must needs bestow some attention on the altered significance of English words. And if this is so, we could not more usefully employ what remains of this present lecture than in seeking to indicate those changes which words most frequently undergo ; and to trace as far as we can the causes, mental and moral, at work in the minds of men to bring these changes about, with the good and evil out of which they have sprung, and to which they bear witness.

For indeed these changes to which words in the progress of time are submitted are not changes at random, but for the most part are obedient to certain laws, are capable of being distributed into certain classes, being the outward transcripts and witnesses of mental and moral processes inwardly going forward in those who bring these changes about. Many, it is true, will escape any classifica-

tion of ours, the changes which have taken place in their meaning being, or at least seeming to us, the result of mere caprice; and not explicable by any principle which we can appeal to as habitually at work in the mind. Many more, however, are reducible to some law or other, and with these we will occupy ourselves now.

And, first, the meaning of a word oftentimes is gradually narrowed. It was once as a generic name, embracing many as yet unnamed species within itself, which all went by its common designation. By and bye it is found convenient that each of these should have its own more special sign allotted to it. It is here just as in some newly enclosed country, where a single household will at first loosely occupy a whole district; while, as cultivation proceeds, this district is gradually parcelled out among a dozen or twenty, and under more accurate culture employs and sustains them all. Thus, for example, all food was once called 'meat;' it is so in our Bible, and 'horse meat' for fodder is still a phrase in use in the North Country; 'meat' is now a name given only to flesh. Any little book or writing was a 'libel' once; now only such a one as is scurrilous and injurious. Any leader was a 'duke' (dux); any journey, by land as much as by sea, a 'voyage; 'fairy' was not a name restricted, as now, to the *Gothic* mythology; thus "the *fairy* Egeria" (Sir J. Harrington); a 'corpse' might be living quite as well as dead. 'Weeds' were whatever covered the earth or the person; while now as respects the earth, those only are

'weeds' which are noxious, or at least self sown ; as regards the person, we speak of no other 'weeds' but the widow's. In each of these cases, the same contraction of meaning, the separating off and assigning to other words of large portions of this, has found place. 'To starve' (the German 'sterben,' and generally spelt 'sterve' up to the middle of the seventeenth century) meant once to die any manner of death ; thus Chaucer says Christ "*sterved* upon the cross for our redemption ;" it now is restricted to the dying by cold or by hunger. Words not a few were once applied to both sexes alike, which are now restricted to the female. It is so even with 'girl,' which was once a young person of either sex ;* while other words in this list, such for instance as 'hoyden' (Milton, prose), 'shrew' (Chaucer), 'coquet,' 'witch' (Wiclif), 'termagant' (Bale), 'scold,' 'slut' (Gower) must be regarded in their present exclusive appropriation to the female sex as evidences of men's rudeness, and not of women's deserts.

The necessities of an advancing civilization demand a greater precision and accuracy in the use of words having to do with weight, measure, number, size. Almost all such words as 'acre,' 'furlong,' 'yard,' 'gallon,' 'peck,' were once of a vague

* And no less so in French with 'dame,' by which form not 'domina' only, but 'dominus,' was represented. Thus in early French poetry, 'Dame Dieu' for 'Dominus Deus' continually. We have here the key to the French exclamation, or oath, as we now perceive it to be, 'Dame!' of which the dictionaries give no account. See Génin's *Variations du Langage Français*, p. 347—a most instructive work.

and unsettled use, and only at a later day, and in obedience to the requirements of commerce and social life, exact measures and designations. Thus every field was once an 'acre;' and this remains so still with the German 'acker.' It was not till about the reign of Edward the First that 'acre' was restricted to an exact measure and portion of land. A 'furlong' was a 'furrow-long,' or length of a furrow. Any pole was a 'yard,' and this the vaguer use of the word survives in 'sailyard,' 'hallyard,' and in other sea-terms. Every pitcher was a 'galon.' (Mark xiv. 13, Wiclif.) And the same has no doubt taken place in all other languages. I will only remind you how the Greek 'drachm' was at first a handful (*δραχμή* = 'manipulus,' from *δράσσω*, to grasp); its later word for ten thousand (*μυρίοι*) implied in Homer's time any great multitude.

Opposite to this is a counter process by which words of narrower intention gradually enlarge the domain of their meaning, becoming capable of much wider application than any which once they admitted. Instances in this kind are fewer than in that which we have just been considering. The main stream and course of human thoughts and human discourse tends the other way, to discerning, distinguishing, dividing, and then to the permanent fixing of the distinctions gained, by the aid of designations which shall keep apart for ever in word that which has been once severed and sundered in thought. Nor is it hard to perceive why this process should be the more frequent. Men are first struck with the likenesses between

those things which are presented to them, with their points of resemblance; on the strength of which they bracket them under a common term. Further acquaintance reveals their points of unlikeness, the real dissimilarities which lurk under superficial resemblances, the need therefore of a different notation for objects which are essentially different. It is comparatively much rarer to discover real likeness under what at first appeared as unlikeness; and usually when a word moves forward, and from a specialty indicates now a generality, it is not in obedience to any such discovery of the true inner likeness of things,—the steps of successful generalizations being marked and secured in other ways. But this widening of a word's meaning is too often a result of those elements of disorganization and decay which are at work in a language. Men forget a word's history and etymology; its distinctive features are obliterated for them, with all which attached it to some thought or fact which by right was its own. Appropriated and restricted once to some striking specialty which it vigorously set out, it can now be used in a wider, vaguer, more unsettled way. It can be employed twenty times for once when it would have been possible formerly to employ it. Yet this is not gain, but pure loss. It is thus become part of the *mob* of words, and has ceased to be part of the *army*.

Let me instance the word 'preposterous.' It is now no longer of any practical service at all in the language, being merely an ungraceful and slipshod

synonym for absurd. But restore and confine it to its old use, and to the one peculiar branch of absurdity which it designated once, namely the reversing of the true order of things, the putting of the last first, and, by consequence, of the first last, and of what excellent service the word would be capable. Thus it is 'preposterous,' in the most accurate use of the word, to put the cart before the horse, to expect wages before the work is done, to hang a man first and try him afterwards ; and in this strict and accurate sense the word was always used by our elder writers.

In like manner 'to prevaricate' was never employed by good writers of the seventeenth century without nearer or more remote allusion to the use of it in the Latin law courts, where a 'prævaricator' (properly a straddler with distorted legs) did not mean as now with us generally and loosely, one who shuffles and evades ; but one who plays false in a particular manner ; who, undertaking or being bound by his office to prosecute a charge, is in secret collusion with the opposite party, and betraying the cause which he affects to support, so manages the accusation as to obtain not the condemnation, but the acquittal of the accused. How much force would the keeping of this in mind add to many passages in our elder divines.

What now is 'idea' for us ? How infinite the fall of this word since the time when Milton sang of the Creator contemplating his newly created world,

"how it showed,

Answering his great *idea*,"

to its present use when this person "has an *idea* that the train has started," and the other "had no *idea* that the dinner would be so bad." But this word 'idea' is perhaps the worst case in the English language; in no other instance perhaps is a word so seldom used with any tolerable correctness; in none is the distance so immense between the sublimity of the word in its proper use, and the triviality of it in its slovenly and its popular.

This tendency in words to lose the sharp rigidly defined outline of meaning which they once possessed, to become of wide, vague application instead of fixed, definite, and precise, to mean almost anything, and so really to mean nothing, is, as I have already said, one of those tendencies, and among the most fatally effectual, which are at work for the final ruin of a language, and, I do not fear to add, for the demoralization of those that speak it. It is one against which we shall all do well to watch; for there is none of us who cannot do something in keeping words close to their own proper meaning, and in resisting their encroachment on the domain of others.

The causes which bring this mischief about are not hard to trace. We all know that when a piece of our silver money has long acted as "pale and common drudge tween man and man," all which it had at first of sharper outline and livelier impress is obliterated from it in the end. So it is with words, above all with words of science and theology. These getting into general use, and passing

often from mouth to mouth, lose the image and superscription which they had, before they descended from the school to the market-place, from the pulpit to the street. Being now caught up by those who understand imperfectly and thus incorrectly their true value, who will not take the trouble of grasping that, or who are incapable of doing so, they are obliged to accommodate themselves to the new sphere in which they circulate, by laying aside much of the precision and accuracy and depth which once they had. They become looser, shallower, more indefinite; till in the end, as exponents of thought and feeling, they cease to be of any service at all.

Sometimes a word does not thus merely narrow or extend its meaning, but altogether changes it, and this in more ways than one. Thus a secondary figurative sense will occasionally quite put out of use and extinguish the literal, until in the entire predominance of that it is altogether forgotten that it ever possessed this. I think I may instance 'bombast' as a word about which, in the great body of those who use it, this forgetfulness is complete. The present meaning of 'bombast' is well known to us all, namely inflated words, "full of sound and fury," but "signifying nothing." This, which is now its sole meaning, was once only the secondary and superinduced; 'bombast' being properly cotton, or the cotton plant, and then the cotton wadding with which garments were stuffed out and lined. You remember perhaps how Prince Hal addresses Falstaff, "How now, my sweet creature of *bombast*."

Here the word is used in its literal sense ; and another early poet has this line :

“Thy body’s bolstered out with *bombast* and with bags.”

It was then transferred in a vigorous image to the big words without strength or solidity wherewith the discourses of some were stuffed out, and has now quite foregone any other meaning. So too ‘to garble’ was once “to cleanse from dross and dirt, as grocers do their spices, to pick or cull out.”* It is never used now in this its primary sense, and has indeed undergone this further change, that while once ‘to garble’ was to sift for the purpose of selecting the best, it is now to sift with a view of picking out the worst. ‘Polite’ is another word in which the figurative sense has quite put out the literal. We still speak of ‘polished’ surfaces ; but not any more with Cudworth, of “*polite* bodies, as looking glasses.”

Or, again, a word will travel on by slow and regularly progressive courses of change, itself a faithful index of changes going on in society and in the minds of men, till at length everything is changed about it. The process of this it is often very curious to observe ; capable as not seldom it is, of being watched step by step in its advances to the final consummation. There may be said to be three leading phases which the word successively presents, three steps in its history. In the first the word grows naturally out of its own root, is filled with its own natural meaning. In

* Phillips, *New World of Words*, 1706.

the second, the word allows another meaning, one superinduced on the former, and extraneous to its etymology, to share with the other in the possession of it, on the ground that where the former exists, the latter commonly co-exists with it. At the third step, the newly introduced meaning, not satisfied with its moiety, with dividing the possession of the word, has thrust out the original and rightful possessor altogether, and remains in sole and exclusive possession. The three successive stages may be represented by *a*, *ab*, *b*; in which series *b*, which is only admitted as secondary at the second stage, at the third becomes primary and indeed alone.

We are not to suppose that in actual fact the transitions from one signification to another are so strongly and distinctly marked, as I have found it convenient to mark them here. Indeed it is hard to imagine anything more gradual, more subtle and imperceptible than the process of change. The manner in which the new meaning first insinuates itself into the old, and then drives out the old, can only be compared to the process of petrification, as rightly understood—the water not gradually turning what is put into it to stone, as we generally take the operation to be; but successively displacing each several particle of that which is brought within its power, and depositing a stony particle in its stead, till, in the end, while all appears to continue the same, all has in fact been thoroughly changed. It is precisely thus, by such slow, gradual, and subtle advances that the new meaning filters

through and pervades the word, little by little displacing entirely that which it before possessed.

No word would illustrate this process better than that old familiar example, familiar probably to us all, of 'villain.' The 'villain' is *first* the serf or peasant, 'villanus,' because attached to the 'villa' or farm. He is *secondly* the peasant who, it is taken for granted, will be churlish, selfish, dishonest, and generally of evil moral conditions, these having come to be assumed as always belonging to him, and to be permanently associated with his name, by those who were at the springs of language. At the *third* step, nothing of the meaning which the etymology suggests, nothing of 'villa,' survives any longer; the peasant is quite dismissed, and the evil moral conditions of him who is called by this name alone remain. That they do so is witnessed by the fact that the name would now in this its final stage be applied as freely, if he deserved it, to peer as to peasant. 'Boor' has had exactly the same history, being first the cultivator of the soil; then secondly, the cultivator of the soil who, it is assumed, will be coarse, rude, and unmannerly; and then thirdly, any one who is coarse, rude, and unmannerly. So too 'pagan;' which is first villager, then heathen villager, and lastly heathen. You may trace the same progress in 'churl,' 'clown,' 'antic,' and in numerous other words. The intrusive meaning might be likened in all these cases to the cuckoo, which is not content with laying its own eggs in the sparrow's nest, but in the end thrusts out and expels the rightful occupants altogether.

Let me instance one word more by way of illustrating this part of my subject. It shall be the word 'gossip,' on which however there will be a word or two first to say. I called your attention in my last lecture to the true character of several words and forms in use among our country people, and claimed for them to be in many instances genuine English, although English now more or less antiquated and overlived. Not otherwise is it with this word 'gossip.' I have myself heard this title given by our Hampshire peasantry to the sponsors in baptism, the godfathers and godmothers. I do not say that it is a usual word ; but it is occasionally employed, and well understood. This is a perfectly correct employment of 'gossip,' in fact its proper and original one, and involves moreover a very curious record of past beliefs. 'Gossip' or 'gossib,' as Chaucer spelt it, is a compound word, made up of 'God' and an old Anglo-Saxon word, 'sib,' still alive in Scotland, as all readers of Walter Scott will remember, and in some parts of England, and which means akin ; they were said to be 'sib,' who were related to one another.* But why, you may ask, was the name given to sponsors ? Out of this reason ;—in the middle ages it was

* "Thus fareth the golden mean through the misconstruction of extremes. Well tempered zeal is lukewarmness, devotion is hypocrisy, charity ostentation, constancy obstinacy, gravity pride, humility abjection of spirit ; and so go through the whole parish of virtues, where misprision and envy are *gossips*, be sure the child shall be nicknamed." (Whitelock's *Zootomia*, 1654, p. 3.)

the prevailing belief (and the Romish Church still affirms it), that those who stood as sponsors to the same child, besides contracting spiritual obligations on behalf of that child, also contracted spiritual affinity one with another; they became *sib*, or akin, in *God*; and thus ‘gossips.’ Out of this faith the Roman Catholic Church will not allow (unless indeed by dispensations procured for money), those who have stood as sponsors to the same child, afterwards to contract marriage with one another, affirming that they are too nearly related for this to be lawful.

Take ‘gossip’ however in its ordinary present use, as one addicted to idle tittle-tattle, and it seems to bear no relation whatever to its etymology and first meaning. The same three steps however which we have traced before will bring us to its present use. ‘Gossips’ are, first, the sponsors, brought by the act of a common sponsorship into affinity and near familiarity with one another; secondly, these sponsors, who being thus brought together, allow themselves one with the other in familiar, and then in trivial and idle, talk; thirdly, any who allow themselves in this trivial and idle talk,—called in French ‘commérage,’ from the fact that ‘commère’ has run through exactly the same stages as its English equivalent.

It is plain that words which designate not things and persons only, but these as they are contemplated more or less in an ethical light, words which tinge with a moral sentiment what they designate, are peculiarly exposed to change; are constantly

liable to take a new coloring, or to lose an old. The gauge and measure of praise or blame, honour or dishonour, admiration or abhorrence, which they convey, is so purely a mental and subjective one, that it is most difficult to take accurate note of its rise or of its fall, while yet there are causes continually at work leading it to the one or the other. There are words not a few, but ethical words above all, which have so imperceptibly drifted away from their former moorings, that although their position is now very different from that which they once occupied, scarcely one in a hundred of casual readers, of those whose attention has not been specially called to the subject, will have observed that they have moved at all.

Here too we observe some words conveying less of praise or blame than once, and some more; while some have wholly shifted from the one to the other. Some words were at one time words of slight, almost of offence, which have altogether ceased to be so now. Still these are rare by comparison with those which once were harmless, but now are harmless no more; which once it may be were terms of honour, but which now imply a slight or even a scorn. It is only too easy to perceive how this should come to pass. But to take an example or two. If any were to speak now of royal children as "*royal imps*," it would sound, and with our present use of the word would be, impertinent and unbecoming enough; and yet '*imp*' was once a name of dignity and honour, and not of slight, or of

undue familiarity. Thus Spenser addresses the Muses in this language,

“Ye sacred *imps* that on Parnasso dwell;”

and ‘imp’ was especially used of the scions of royal or illustrious houses. More than one epitaph, still existing, of our ancient nobility might be quoted, beginning in such language as this, “Here lies that noble *imp*.” Or what should we say of a poet who should commence a solemn poem in this fashion,

“Oh Israel, oh household of the Lord,

Oh Abraham’s *brats*, oh brood of blessed seed”—

what should we consider, but that he meant by using low words on solemn occasions to turn sacred things into ridicule? Yet this was very far from the intention of Gascoigne, the poet whose lines I have just quoted. “Abraham’s *brats*” was used by him in perfect good faith, and without the slightest feeling that anything ludicrous or contemptuous adhered to the word ‘brat,’ as indeed in his time there did not.

Call a person ‘pragmatical’ now, and you imply not merely that he is busy, but over-busy, officious and self-important and pompous to boot. But it once meant nothing of the kind, and ‘pragmatical’ (like *πραγματικός*), was one engaged in affairs, being an honorable title, given to a man simply and industriously engaged in the business which properly concerned him.* So

* “We cannot always be contemplative, or *pragmatical* abroad: but have need of some delightful intermissions, wherein the enlarged soul may leave off awhile her severe schooling.” (Milton, *Tetrachordon*.)

too to say that a person ‘meddles’ or is a ‘meddler’ implies now that he interferes unduly in other men’s matters, meddling, or mixing himself up, with them. This was not insinuated in the earlier uses of the word. On the contrary three of our earlier translations of the Bible have, “*Meddle* with your own business” (1 Thess. iv. 11); and Barrow in one of his sermons draws at some length the distinction between ‘meddling’ and “being *meddlesome*,” only the latter of which he condemns.

Or take again the words, ‘to prose’ or a ‘proser.’ It cannot indeed be affirmed that they convey any *moral* condemnation, yet they certainly convey no compliment now; and are almost among the last which any one would be willing should with justice be applied either to his talking or his writing. For ‘to prose’, as we all now know too well, is to talk or write heavily and tediously, without spirit and without animation; but ‘to prose’ was once very different from this; it was simply the antithesis of to versify, and a ‘proser’ the antithesis of a versifier or a poet. It will follow that the most rapid and liveliest writer who ever wrote, if he did not write in verse would have ‘prosed’ and been a ‘proser,’ in the language of our ancestors. Thus Drayton writes of his contemporary Nashe :

“And surely Nashe, though he a *proser* were,
A branch of laurel yet deserves to bear;”

that is, the ornament not of a ‘proser,’ but of a poet. The tacit assumption that vigour, animation, rapid movement, with all the precipitation

of the spirit, belong to verse rather than to prose, and are the exclusive possession of it, is that which must explain the changed uses of the word.

Still it is according to a word's present signification that we must employ it now. It would be no excuse, if having applied an insulting epithet to any, we should afterwards plead that according to its etymology and primary usage it had nothing offensive or insulting about it; although indeed Swift assures us that in his time such a plea was made and was allowed. "I remember," he says, "at a trial in Kent where Sir George Rooke was indicted for calling a gentleman 'knave' and 'villain,' the lawyer for the defendant brought off his client by alledging that the words were not injurious; for 'knave' in the old and true signification imported only a servant; and 'villain' in Latin is villicus, which is no more than a man employed in country labour, or rather a baili." The lawyer may have deserved his success for his ingenuity and his boldness; though, if Swift reports him aright, not certainly on the ground of the strict accuracy either of his Anglo-Saxon or his Latin.

The moral sense and conviction of men is often at work upon their words, giving them new turns in obedience to these convictions, of which their changed use will then remain a permanent record. Let me illustrate this by the history of our word 'sycophant.' You probably are acquainted with the story which the Greek scholiasts invented

by way of explaining a word of which they knew nothing, namely that the ‘sycophant’ was a “manifestor of figs,” one who exposed others in the act of exporting figs from Attica, an act forbidden, they asserted, by the Athenian law. Be this explanation worth what it may, the word obtained in Greek a more general sense; any accuser, and then any *false accuser* was a ‘sycophant;’ and when the word was first adopted into the English language, it was in this meaning: thus an old English poet speaks of “the railing route of *sycophants* ;” and Holland: “The poor man that hath nought to lose, is not afraid of the *sycophant*.” But it has not kept this meaning; a ‘sycophant’ is now a fawning flatterer; not one who speaks ill of you behind your back; rather one who speaks good of you before your face, but good which he does not in his heart believe. Yet how true a moral instinct has presided over the changed signification of the word. The calumniator and the flatterer, although they seem so opposed to one another, how closely united they really are. They grow out of the same root. The same baseness of spirit which shall lead one to speak evil of you behind your back, will lead him to fawn on you and flatter you before your face,—out of a sense of which the Italians have a proverb: “Who flatters me before, spatters me behind.”

But it is not the moral sense only of men which is thus at work, modifying their words; but the immoral as well. If the good which men have and feel, penetrates into their speech, and leaves its

deposit there, so does also the evil. Thus we may trace a constant tendency—in too many cases it has been a successful one—to empty words employed in the condemnation of evil, of the depth and earnestness of the moral reprobation which they once conveyed. Men's too easy toleration of sin, the feebleness of their moral indignation against it, bring about that the blame which words expressed once, has in some of them become much weaker now than once, has from others vanished altogether. "To do a *shrewd* turn," was once to do a *wicked* turn; and Chaucer, using 'shrewdness' by which to translate the Latin 'improbitas,' shews that it meant wickedness for him; nay, two murderers he calls two 'shrews,'—for there were, as already noticed, male shrews once as well as female. But 'a shrewd turn' now, while it implies a certain amount of sharp dealing, yet implies nothing more; and 'shrewdness' is applied to men rather in their praise than in their dispraise. And not 'shrewd' and 'shrewdness' only, but a great many other words,—I will only instance 'peevish,' 'wayward,' 'luxury,' 'luxurious,' 'uncivil,' conveyed once a much more earnest moral censure than now they do.

But I must bring this lecture to a close. I have but opened to you paths, which you, if you are so minded, can follow up for yourselves. We have learned lately to speak of men's 'antecedents;' the phrase is newly come up; and it is common to say that if we would know what a man really now is, we must know his 'antecedents,' that is, what he has

been in time past. This is quite as true about words. If we would know what they now are, we must know what they have been ; we must know, if possible, the date and place of their birth, the successive stages of their subsequent history, the company which they have kept, all the road which they have travelled, and what has brought them to the point at which now we find them ; we must know, in short, their antecedents.

And let me say, without attempting to bring back school into these lectures which are out of school, that, seeking to do this, we might add an interest to our researches in the lexicon and the dictionary which otherwise they could never have ; that taking such words, for example, as ἐκκλησία, or παλιγγενεσία, or εὐτραπελία, or σοφιστής, or σχολαστικός, in Greek ; as ‘religio,’ or ‘sacramentum,’ or ‘urbanitas,’ or ‘superstitio,’ in Latin ; as ‘libertine,’ or ‘casuistry,’* or ‘humanity,’ or ‘humourous,’ in English, and seeking to trace the manner in which one meaning grew out of and superseded another, and how they arrived at that use in which they have finally rested (if indeed there is not still a future before our own), we shall derive, I believe, amusement, I am sure, instruction ; we shall feel that we are really getting something, increasing the moral and intellectual stores of our minds ; furnishing ourselves with that which may hereafter be of service to ourselves, may be of service to

* See Whewell’s *History of Moral Philosophy in England*, pp. xxvii—xxxii.

others—than which there can be no feeling more pleasurable, none more delightful. I shall be glad and thankful, if you can feel as much in regard of that lecture, which I now bring to its end.

LECTURE V.

ON THE CHANGED SPELLING OF ENGLISH WORDS.

WHEN I announce to you that the subject of my lecture to-day will be English orthography, or the spelling of words in our native language, with the alterations which this has undergone, you may perhaps think with yourselves that a weightier, or, if not a weightier, yet a more interesting, subject might have occupied this our concluding lecture. I cannot allow it to be wanting either in importance or in interest. Unimportant it certainly is not, but might well engage, as it often has engaged, the attention of those with far higher acquirements than any which I possess. Uninteresting it may be, by faults in the manner of treating it ; but I am sure it ought as little to be this ; and would never prove so in competent hands. Let us then address ourselves to this matter, not without good hope that it may yield us both profit and pleasure.

Some one has said, "The invention of printing was very well ; but, as compared to the invention of writing, it was no such great matter after all." Whoever it was who made this observation, it is clear that for him use and familiarity had not obliterated the wonder which there is in that, whereat we probably have long ceased to wonder

at all—the power, namely, of representing sounds by written signs, of reproducing for the eye that which existed at first only for the ear: and the estimate which he formed of the relative value of these two inventions was a just one. Writing indeed stands more nearly on a level with speaking, and deserves rather to be compared with it, than with printing; which, with all its utility, is yet of altogether another and inferior type of greatness: or, if this is too much to claim for writing, it may at any rate be affirmed to stand midway between the other two, and to be as much superior to the one as it is inferior to the other.

The intention of the written word, that which presides at its first formation, the end whereunto it is a mean, is by aid of symbols agreed on before, to represent to the eye with the greatest accuracy which is possible the spoken word.

It never fulfils this intention completely, and by degrees more and more imperfectly. Short as man's spoken word often falls of his thought, so short his written word falls often of his spoken. Several causes contribute to this. In the first place, the marks of imperfection and infirmity cleave to writing, as to every other invention of man. All alphabets have been left incomplete. They have superfluous letters, letters, that is, which they do not want, because other letters already represent the sound which they represent; they have dubious letters, letters, that is, which say nothing certain about the sounds they stand for, because more than one sound is represented by them—our 'c' for

instance, which sometimes has the sound of 's,' as in 'city,' sometimes of 'k,' as in 'cat;' they are deficient in letters, that is, the language has elementary sounds which have no corresponding letters appropriated to them, and can only be represented by combinations of letters. All alphabets, I believe, have some of these faults, not a few of them have all, and more. This then is one reason of the imperfect reproduction of the spoken word by the written. But another is, that the human voice is so wonderfully fine and flexible an organ, is able to mark such subtle and delicate distinctions of sound, so infinitely to modify and vary these sounds, that were an alphabet complete as human art could make it, did it possess eight and forty instead of four and twenty letters, there would still remain a multitude of sounds which it could only approximately give back.

But a further cause for the divergence which comes gradually to find place between men's spoken and their written words is this; what men do often, they will seek to do with the least possible trouble. There is nothing which they do oftener than repeat words; they will seek here then to save themselves trouble; they will contract two syllables into one; they will slur over, and thus after a while cease to pronounce, certain letters; for hard letters they will substitute soft; for those which require a certain effort to pronounce, they will substitute those which require little or none.

And thus as the result of these causes a gulf between the written and spoken word will not

merely exist; but it will be the tendency of it to grow ever wider and wider. This tendency indeed will be partially counterworked by approximations which from time to time will by silent consent be made of the written word to the spoken; here and there a letter dropped in speech will be dropped also in writing, as the 's' in so many French words, where its absence is marked by a circumflex; a new shape, contracted or briefer, which a word has taken on the lips of men, will find its representation in their writing. Still for all this, and despite of these partial readjustments of the relations between the two, the anomalies will be infinite; there will be a multitude of written letters which have ceased to be sounded letters; a multitude of words will exist in one shape upon our lips, and in quite another in our books.

It is inevitable that the question should arise—Shall these anomalies be meddled with? shall it be attempted to remove them, and bring writing and speech into harmony and consent—a harmony and consent which never indeed in actual fact at any period of the language existed, but which yet may be regarded as the idea of written speech, as that which it was intended to display? If the attempt is to be made, it is clear that it can only be made in one way. The question is not open, whether Mahomet shall go to the mountain, *or* the mountain to Mahomet. The spoken word is the mountain; it will not stir; it will resist all interference. It feels its own primary rights, that it existed the first, that it is, so to speak, the elder

brother; and it will never be induced to change itself for the purpose of conforming and complying with the written word. Men will not be persuaded to pronounce 'would' and 'debt,' because they write these words 'would' and 'debt' severally with an 'l' and with a 'b:' but perhaps they might be persuaded to write 'woud' and 'det,' because they pronounce so, and thus with all other words, in which there exists at present a chasm between the word as we speak it, and the word as we write it.

Here we have the explanation of that which in the history of almost all literatures has repeated itself more than once, namely the endeavour to introduce phonetic writing. It has certain plausibilities to rest on; it has its appeal to the unquestionable fact that the written word was intended to picture to the eye what the spoken word sounded in the ear. At the same time I believe that it would be impossible to introduce it; and if it *were* possible, that it would be most undesirable, and this for two reasons; the first being that the losses consequent upon its introduction would far outweigh the gains, even supposing those gains as great as the advocates of the scheme promise; the second, that these promised gains would themselves be only very partially realized, or not at all.

In the first place, I believe it to be impossible. It is clear that such a scheme must begin with the reconstruction of the alphabet. The first thing that the phonographers have perceived is the necessity for the creation of a vast number of new signs, the poverty of all existing alphabets, at any

rate of our own, not yielding a several sign for all the several sounds in the language. Our English phonographers have invented more than a dozen of these new signs or letters, which are henceforth to take their place and to enjoy equal rights with our *a b c*; rejecting three, and adding thirteen, they have raised their alphabet from twenty-six letters to thirty-six. But such a reconstruction of the alphabet is simply an impossibility, as much an impossibility as would be the reconstitution of the structure of the language in any points where it was manifestly deficient or illogical. I mean that it is as impossible to procure the reception by a people of such a reconstituted alphabet. Sciolists or scholars may sit down in their studies, and devise these new letters, and prove that we need them, and that the introduction of them would be a great gain, and a manifest improvement; and this may be all very true: but if they think they can induce a people to adopt them, they know little of how closely entwined the alphabet is with the whole innermost life of a people. One may freely own that all present alphabets are redundant here, are deficient there; our English perhaps is as greatly at fault as any, and with that we have chiefly to do. It is not to be denied that it has more letters than one to express one and the same sound, that it has only one letter to express two or three sounds; that it has sounds which are only capable of being expressed at all by awkward and roundabout expedients. Yet at the same time we must accept the fact, as we accept any other which it is out of

our power to change—with regret, indeed, but with a perfect acquiescence : as one accepts the fact that Ireland is not thirty or forty miles nearer to England—that it is so difficult to get round Cape Horn—that the climate of Africa is so fatal to European life. A people will no more quit their alphabet than they will quit their language ; they will no more consent to modify one *ab extra* than the other. Cæsar avowed that with all his power he could not introduce a new word, and certainly Claudius could not introduce a new letter. Centuries may sanction the bringing in of a new one, or the dropping of an old. But to imagine that it is possible suddenly to introduce a group of new, a dozen or more, as these reformers propose—they might just as feasibly propose that the English language should form its comparatives and superlatives on some entirely new scheme, say in Greek fashion, by the terminations ‘ oteros’ and ‘ otatos ;’ or that we should agree to set up a dual ; or that our substantives should return to their Anglo-Saxon declensions. Any one of these or like proposals would not betray a whit more ignorance of the eternal laws which regulate human language, and of the limits within which deliberate action upon it is possible, than does this of increasing our alphabet by thirteen entirely novel signs.

But grant it possible, grant that our six and twenty letters have so little sacredness in them, that men would endure a crowd of unknown interlopers to mix themselves on an equal footing with them, still this could only be from a sense of the greatness

of the advantage to be derived from this introduction. The great advantage claimed by the advocates of the system is that it would facilitate the learning to read, and wholly save the labour of learning to spell, which "on the present plan occupies," as they assure us, "at the very lowest calculation from three to five years." Spelling, it is said, would no more need to be learned at all; since whoever knew the sound, would necessarily know also the spelling, this being in all cases in perfect conformity with that. The anticipation of this gain rests upon two assumptions which are tacitly taken for granted, but both of them, as I now perceive, erroneous; although I granted too hastily in some former observations on the same subject that the system would be attended by this gain.

The first of these assumptions is, that all men pronounce all words alike, so that whenever they come to spell a word, they will exactly agree as to what the outline of its sound is. Now we are sure men will not do this from the fact that, before there was any fixed and settled orthography in our language, when therefore everybody was more or less a phonographer, seeking to write down the word as it sounded *to him*, for he had no other law to guide him, the variations of spelling were infinite. Take for instance the word 'sudden;' which does not seem to promise any great scope for variety. I have myself met with this word spelt in no less than the following fourteen ways among our early writers; 'sodain,' 'sodaine,' 'sodan,' 'sodayne,'

'sodden,' 'sodein,' 'sodeine,' 'soden,' 'sodeyn,' 'suddain,' 'suddaine,' 'suddein,' 'sudden,' 'sudeyn.' The same is evident from the spelling of uneducated persons in our own day. They have no other rule but the sound to guide them. How is it that they do not all spell alike; erroneously, it may be, as having only the sound for their guide, but still falling all into exactly the same errors? They not merely spell wrong, which might be laid to the charge of our perverse system of spelling, but with an inexhaustible diversity of error, and that too in case of simplest words. Thus the little town of Woburn would seem to give small room for caprice in spelling, while yet the postmaster there has made, from the superscription of letters that have passed through his hands, a collection of no less than two hundred and forty-four varieties of ways in which the place has been spelt. It may be said that these were all or nearly all from the letters of the uneducated. True—but it is for their sakes, and to place them on a level with the educated, or rather to accelerate their education by the omission of a useless yet troublesome discipline, that the change is proposed. I wish to show you that after the change they would be just as much or almost as much at a loss in spelling as now.

And another reason which would make it just as necessary then to learn orthography as now, is the following. Pronunciation, as I have already noticed, is far too fine and subtle a thing to be more than approximated to, and indicated in the written letter. In a multitude of cases the difficul-

ties which pronunciation presented would be sought to be overcome in different ways, so that different spellings would arise ; or if not so, one would have to be arbitrarily selected, and would have need to be learned, just as much as the spelling of a word now has need to be learned. I will only ask you, in proof of this which I affirm, to turn to any Pronouncing Dictionary. This greatest of all absurdities, a Pronouncing Dictionary, may be of some service to you in this matter ; it will certainly be of no service to you in any other. When you mark the elaborate and yet ineffectual artifices by which it toils after the finer distinctions of articulation, seeks to reproduce in letters what exists and can only exist as the spoken tradition of pronunciation, acquired from lip to lip, capable of being learned, but incapable of being taught ; or when you compare two of these dictionaries with one another, and mark the entirely different schemes and combinations of letters which they have for representing the same sound to the eye ; you will then perceive how idle the attempt to make the written in language commensurate with the sounded ; you will own that not merely out of human caprice, ignorance, or indolence, the former falls short of and differs from the latter ; but that this lies in the necessity of things, in the fact that man's voice can effect a great deal more than ever his letter can. You will then perceive that there would be as much, or nearly as much, of the arbitrary in spelling which calls itself phonetic as in our present, that spelling would have to be learned just as really then as

now. Nor should we be able to dismiss the spelling card even after the arrival of that great day, when, for example, those lines of Pope which hitherto have presented themselves to our eyes in this fashion :

“ But errs not nature from this gracious end,
From burning suns when livid deaths descend,
When earthquakes swallow, or when tempests sweep
Towns to one grave, whole nations to the deep?”

when, I say, instead of these we should read :

“ Ƿ bŕst erz not netyur from ðis grefþs end,
from bŕrniŋ sŕnz hwen livid dets djsend,
hwen ertkweks swolo, or hwen tempests swiþ
tounz tu wŕn grev, hŕl nefonz tu ðe djp.”

The scheme would not then fulfil its promises. Its promised gains, when we come to look closely at them, disappear. And now for its losses. There are in every language a vast number of words, which are indistinguishable to the ear, but are at once distinguishable to the eye by the spelling. I will only mention such as are the same parts of speech; thus ‘sun’ and ‘son;’ ‘reign,’ ‘rain,’ and ‘rein;’ ‘hair’ and ‘hare;’ ‘plate’ and ‘plait;’ ‘moat’ and ‘mote;’ ‘pear’ and ‘pair;’ ‘air’ and ‘heir;’ ‘ark’ and ‘arc;’ ‘mite’ and ‘might;’ ‘pour’ and ‘pore;’ ‘veil’ and ‘vale;’ ‘knight’ and ‘night;’ ‘knave’ and ‘nave;’ ‘pier’ and ‘peer;’ ‘rite’ and ‘right;’ ‘site’ and ‘sight;’ ‘aisle’ and ‘isle;’ ‘concent’ and ‘consent;’ ‘signet’ and ‘cygnet.’ Now, of course, it is a real disadvantage, and may be the cause of serious confusion, that there should be words in spoken language of

entirely different origin and meaning, which yet are not in sound to be differenced from one another. The phonographers simply propose to extend this disadvantage already cleaving to our spoken language, to the written language as well. It is fault enough in the French language, that 'mère' a mother, 'mer' the sea, 'maire' a mayor of a town, should have no perceptible difference between them in the spoken tongue; or again that the same should find place in respect of 'ver' a worm, 'vert' green, 'verre' a glass, 'vers' a verse. Surely it is not very wise to propose gratuitously to extend the same fault to the written language as well.

This loss in so many cases of the power of discriminating between words, which however liable to confusion now in our spoken language, are liable to none in our written, would be serious enough: but more serious than this would be the loss in so many cases of all which visibly connects a word with the past, which tells its history, and indicates the quarter from which it has been derived. In how many English words a letter which is silent to the ear, is yet most eloquent to the eye—the 'g' for instance in 'deign,' 'feign,' 'reign,' 'impugn,' telling as it does of 'dignor,' 'fingo,' 'regno,' and 'impugno;' as the 'b' in 'debt,' 'doubt,' is not idle, while it tells of 'debitum' and 'dubium.'

At present in all languages it is the written word which is the conservative element in them. It is the abiding witness against the mutilations or other capricious changes in their shape which

affectation, folly, ignorance, and half knowledge would introduce. It is not indeed always able to hinder the final adoption of these corrupter forms, but yet opposes a constant and very often a successful resistance to them. With the adoption of phonetic spelling, this witness would exist no longer; whatever was spoken would have also to be written, let it be never so barbarous, never so great a departure from the true form of the word. Nor is it merely probable that such a barbarizing process, such an adopting and sanctioning of a vulgarism, might take place, but among phonographers it already has taken place. We all probably are aware that there is a vulgar pronunciation of the word 'Europe,' as though it were 'Eurup.' Now it is quite possible that numerically more persons in England may pronounce the word in this manner than in the right; and therefore the phonographers are only true to their principles when they spell it in the fashion which they do, 'Eurup,' or indeed, omitting the E at the beginning, Urup, with the life of the first syllable assailed no less than that of the second. What are the consequences? First, its relations with the old mythology are at once and entirely broken off; secondly, the probable etymology of the word from two Greek words, signifying 'broad' and 'face,' Europe being so called from the *broad* line or *face* of coast which our continent presented to the Asiatic Greek, is totally obscured. But so far from the spelling servilely following the pronunciation, I should be bold to affirm that if ninety-nine out of every hun-

dred persons in England chose to call it 'Urup,' this would be a vulgarism still, against which the written word ought to maintain its protest, not sinking down to their level, but seeking to raise them to its own.*

And if there is much in orthography which is unsettled now, how much more would there be then. Inasmuch as the pronunciation of words is continually altering, their spelling would of course have continually to alter too. For that pronunciation is undergoing constant changes, although changes for the most part unmarked, or marked only by a few, it would not be difficult to prove. Take a Pronouncing Dictionary of fifty or a hundred years ago; turn to almost any page, and you will observe schemes of pronunciation there recommended, which are now merely vulgarisms, or which have been dropped altogether. We gather from a discussion in Boswell's *Life of Johnson*, that in

* How different from innovations like this the changes in the spelling of German which J. Grimm, so far as his own example may reach, *has* introduced, and the still bolder and more extensive ones which in the *Preface* to his *Deutsches Wörterbuch*, pp. liv.—lxii., he avows his desire to see introduced, as the employment of 'f,' not merely where it is at present used, but also wherever 'v' is now employed; the substituting the 'v,' which would be thus disengaged, for 'w,' and the entire dismissal of 'w.' They may be advisable, or they may not; it is not for strangers to offer any opinion; but at any rate they are not a seizing of the fluctuating, superficial accidents of the present, and a seeking to give permanent authority to these, but they all rest on a deep historic study of the language, and of the true genius of the language.

his time 'great' was as often pronounced 'greet' as 'grate : ' Pope usually so rhymes it ; thus in the *Dunciad* :

" Here swells the shelf with Ogilby the *great*,
There, stamped with arms, Newcastle shines *complete*."

Again Pope rhymes 'obliged' with 'besieged ;' and it has only ceased to be 'obleege'd' almost in our own time.* Who now drinks a cup of 'tay'? yet there is abundant evidence that this was the fashionable pronunciation in the first half of the last century. To appeal again to Pope, and to adduce one couplet out of many which he or others would supply in proof :

" Here thou, great Anna, whom three realms *obey*,
Dost sometimes counsel take, and sometimes *tea*."

So too a pronunciation which still survives, though scarcely among well educated persons, I mean 'Room' for 'Rome,' must have been in Shakespeare's time the predominant one, else there would have been no meaning in that play on words occurring in *Julius Caesar*, where Cassius, complaining that in all *Rome* there was not *room* for a single man, exclaims,

" Now is it *Rome* indeed, and *room* enough."

This much I have thought good to say in respect of that entire revolution in English orthography, which some rash innovators have proposed. Let me, dismissing them and their innovations, call

* See back, p. 46.

your attention to those alterations in spelling now which are constantly going forward, at some periods more rapidly than at others, but which never wholly cease out of a language; seeking to trace, where this is possible, the motives and inducements which bring them about. It is a subject which none can neglect, who desires to obtain even a tolerably accurate acquaintance with his native tongue. Some principles have been laid down in the course of what has been said already, which may help us to judge whether the changes which have found place in our own have been for better or for worse. We shall find, if I am not mistaken, of both kinds.

There are alterations in spelling which are for the worse. Thus an altered spelling will sometimes obscure the origin of a word to those who, but for this, would at once have known whence and what it was, and would have found both pleasure and profit in this knowledge. I need not say that in all those cases where the earlier spelling revealed the secret of the word, told its history, which the later defaces or conceals, the change has been injurious, and is to be regretted; while at the same time, where it has thoroughly established itself, there is nothing to do but to acquiesce in it: it would be absurd to seek to undo it. Thus when 'grocer' was spelt 'grosser,' it was comparatively easy to see that he first had his name because he sold his wares not by retail, but in the *gross*. 'Coxcomb' tells us nothing now; but it did when spelt, as it used to be, 'cockscomb,' the *comb* of a

cock being a sort of ensign or token which the fool was accustomed to wear. How many now understand 'woodbine'? but who could have helped understanding 'woodbind'?

'Pigmy' used formerly to be spelt 'pygmy,' and so long as it was so, no Greek scholar could see the word, but at once he knew that by it were indicated manikins whose measure in height was no greater than that of a man's arm from the elbow to the closed *fist*. Now he may know this in other ways; but the word itself, so long as he assumes it to be rightly spelt, tells him nothing. Or again, the old spelling, 'diamant,' was preferable to the modern, *diamond*.' It was preferable, because it told more of the quarter from whence the word had reached us. 'Diamant' and 'adamant' are in fact only two different appropriations of one and the same Greek, which afterwards became a Latin, word. The meaning of 'adamant' is, as you know, properly the untameable, and it was a name given at first to the highest tempered steel; but afterwards transferred* to the most precious among all the precious stones, as that which surpassed in hardness every thing besides.

* First so used by Theophrastus in Greek, and by Pliny in Latin.—The real identity of the two words explains Milton's use of 'diamond,' *Paradise Lost*, 7; and in that sublime passage in his *Apology for Smectymnuus*: "Then zeal, whose substance is etherial, arming in complete *diamond*."—Diez, (*Wörterbuch d. Roman. Sprachen*, p. 123), supposes that it was under a certain influence of 'diafano,' the translucent, that 'adamante' in Italian, from whence we have derived the word, was changed into 'diamante.'

Neither are new spellings to be praised, which separate a word in appearance from other words with which it is really connected ; which, for those who are not thoroughly acquainted with the subject, tend to break up families of words into separate groups. Thus when 'jaw' was spelt 'chaw,' no one could miss its connexion with the verb 'to chew.' Now probably ninety-nine out of a hundred who use both words, are entirely unaware of any relationship between them. It is the same with 'cousin' (consanguineus), and 'to cozen' or to deceive. I will not say which of these words should conform itself to the spelling of the other. There was great irregularity in the spelling of both from the first ; yet for all this, it was then better than now, when a permanent distinction has established itself between them, keeping out of sight that 'to cozen' is in all likelihood to deceive under show of kindred and affinity ; which if it be so, Shakespeare's words,

" *Cousins* indeed, and by their uncle *cozened*
Of comfort."*

will be found to contain not a pun, but an etymology. The real relation between 'bliss' and 'to bless' is in like manner at present obscured.

The omission of a letter, or the addition of a letter, may each effectually do its work in concealing the true character and origin of a word. Thus the omission of a letter. When the first syllable of 'bran-new,' was spelt 'brand' with a final 'd,' 'brand-new,' how vigorous an image did the word contain. The 'brand' is

* *Richard III.*, iv. 4.

the fire, and 'brand-new' is that which is fresh and bright, as being newly come from the forge and fire. It was equivalent to 'fire-new' (Shakespeare), while as now spelt, the word conveys to us no image at all.

Again, you have the word 'scrip'—as a 'scrip' of paper, government 'scrip.' Is this the same word with the Saxon 'scrip,' a wallet, having in some strange manner obtained these meanings so different and so remote? Have we here two wholly different words, though spelt alike (homonyms)? or only two different applications of one and the same word? We have only to note how the first of these 'scrips' used to be written, namely with a final 't,' not 'scrip' but 'script,' and we are at once able to answer the question. This 'scrip' is a Latin, as the other is an Anglo-Saxon, word, and meant at first simply a *written* (scripta) piece of paper—a circumstance which since the omission of the final 't' may easily escape our knowledge. 'Afraid' was spelt much better in old times with the double 'ff,' than with the single 'f' as now. It was then clear that it was not another form of 'afeard,' but wholly separate from it, the participle of the verb 'to affray,' 'affrayer,' or as it is now written, 'effrayer.'

In the cases hitherto adduced, it has been the omission of a letter which has disturbed and obscured the etymology. The intrusion of a letter sometimes does the same. Thus in the early editions of Milton, and in all writers of his time you would find 'scent', an odor, spelt 'sent.' It was better so; there is no other noun substantive

'sent,' with which it is in danger of being confounded ; while its relation with 'sentio,' with 'resent,'* 'dissent,' &c., is put out of sight by its novel spelling ; the intrusive 'c' serves only to mislead.

Again, 'whole' in Wiclif's Bible, and indeed much later, occasionally as far down as Spenser, is spelt 'hole,' without the 'w' at the beginning. There may be the advantage in the present orthography of at once distinguishing the word to the eye from any other word ; but at the same time the initial 'w' now prefixed hides its relation to the verb 'to heal,' with which it is more closely allied. The 'whole' man is he whose hurt is 'healed' or covered (we say of the convalescent that he 'recovers'), the word being closely allied to 'hale' (integer), from which also by its modern spelling it is divided. 'Wholesome' has naturally followed the fortunes of 'whole' ; it was spelt 'holsome' once.

'Island' is another word of which our present spelling is inferior to the old, inasmuch as it suggests a hybrid formation, as though the word were made up of the Latin 'insula,' and the Saxon 'land.' It is quite true that 'isle' is in relation with, and descent from, 'insula,' 'isola,' 'île ;' and hence probably the misspelling of 'island.' This

* How close this relationship was once, not merely in respect of etymology, but also of significance, a passage like this will prove: "Perchance, as vultures are said to smell the earthiness of a dying corpse ; so this bird of prey [the evil spirit which personated Samuel, 1 Sam. xxviii. 14] *resented* a worse than earthly savor in the soul of Saul, as evidence of his death at hand." (Fuller, *The Profane State*, b. 5. c. 4.)

last however has nothing to do with 'insula,' being identical with the German 'eiland,' the Anglo-Saxon 'ealand,' and signifying the sea-land, or land girt round with the sea, just as 'insula' = 'in salo.' And it is worthy of note that this spelling of 'island' with an 's' in the first syllable is quite modern. Thus in all the earlier versions of the Scriptures, including the authorized Version as at first set forth, it is 'iland'; and in proof that this is not accidental, it may be observed that while 'iland' has not the 's,' 'isle' has it, as at Rev. i. 9. 'Iland' indeed is the spelling which we meet with far down into the seventeenth century.

What has just been said of 'island' leads me naturally to observe that one of the most frequent causes of alteration in the spelling of a word is a wrongly assumed derivation. It is then sought to bring the word into harmony with, and to make it by its spelling suggest, this derivation, which has been erroneously thrust upon it. Here is a subject which, followed out as it deserves, would form no uninteresting nor yet uninteresting chapter in the history of language. I will offer one or two small contributions to it. But first let me observe how remarkable an evidence we have in this fact of the manner in which not the learned only, but all people alike, learned and unlearned, crave to have a meaning in the words which they employ, crave to have these words not as body only, but as body and soul. What an attestation, I say, of this lies in the fact that where a word in its proper derivation is unintelligible to them, they will shape and mould

it into some other form, not enduring that it should be a mere dead sound without sense in their ears ; and if they do not know the right origin of it, will rather put into it a wrong one, than that it should have for them no meaning, and suggest no derivation at all.*

There is probably no language in which such a process has not been going forward ; in which it is not the explanation, in a great number of instances, of the changes in spelling and even in form which words have undergone. I will offer a few examples of it from foreign tongues, before adducing any from our own. Here is one from the Greek, but one of which the consequences survive in our own language to the present day. 'Pyramid' is a word, the spelling of which is affected by an erroneous assumption of its derivation. It is spelt by us with a 'y' in the first syllable, as it was spelt with the *υ* corresponding in the Greek. But why was this ? It was because the Greeks assumed that the pyramids were so named from their having the appearance of flame going up into a point,† and so they spelt 'pyramid' that they might find $\pi\tilde{\upsilon}\rho$ or 'pyre' in it ; while in fact the word 'pyramid,' as those best qualified to speak on the matter declare to us, has nothing to do with flame or fire at all ; being an Egyptian word of quite a different signification, and the Egyptian letters being much

* Diez looks with much favour on this process, and calls it, Ein sinnreiches mittel fremdlinge ganz heimisch zu machen.

† Ammianus Marcellinus, xxii. 15. 28.

better represented by the diphthong 'ei' than by the letter 'y,' as no doubt but for this mistaken scheme of what the word was intended to mean they would have been.

Once more—the form in which the Greeks reproduced the Hebrew 'Jerusalem,' namely 'Hierosolyma,' was intended in all probability to express that it was the *sacred* city of the *Solymi*.* At all events the intention not merely of reproducing the Hebrew word, but of making it also significant in Greek, of finding *ἱερόν* in it, is plainly discernible. For indeed the Greeks were exceedingly intolerant of foreign words, till they had laid aside their foreign appearance—of all words into which they could not thus put a Greek soul;† and with a very characteristic vanity, and an ignoring of all other tongues but their own, seemed tacitly to assume that all words, from whatever quarter derived, were to be explained by Greek etymologies.

'Tartar' is another word, of which it is at least possible that a wrongly assumed derivation has modified the spelling, and indeed not the spelling

* Tacitus, *Hist.* v. 2.

† Let me illustrate this by one or two instances more in a note. Thus their word from which, through the Latin, our 'butter' has descended to us, is borrowed, as Pliny (*Hist. Nat.* xxviii. 9) tells us, from a Scythian word, now to us unknown: yet it is sufficiently plain that they so shaped it and spelt it as to contain apparent allusion to *cow* and *cheese*. In *βούτυρον* there is an evident feeling after *βούς* and *τυρόν*. Herodian in like manner (v. 6) reproduces the name of the Syrian goddess Astarte in a shape that is significant also for Greek ears—*ἀστροάρχη*, the star-ruler, or star-queen.

only, but the very shape in which we now possess it. To many among us it may be known that the people designated by this word are not 'Tartars,' but 'Tatars,' and you will sometimes see the word spelt without the 'r' by those who are curious in their spelling. How then, it may be asked, did the form 'Tartar' arise? When the terrible hordes of middle Asia burst in upon civilized Europe in the thirteenth century, not a few beheld in the ravages of their innumerable cavalry a fulfilment of that prophetic word in the Revelations (chap. ix.) concerning the opening of the bottomless pit; and from this belief ensued the change of their name from 'Tatars' to 'Tartars,' that thus it might be put into closer relation with 'Tartarus' or hell, out of which their multitudes were supposed to have proceeded.*

Another good example in the same kind is the modern German word 'Sündflut,' which is now so spelt as to signify a 'sinflood,' the plague or *flood* of waters brought on the world by the *sins* of mankind; and probably some of us have before this admired the pregnant significance of the word. Yet the old High German word had originally no such intention; it was spelt 'Sinfluot,' that is 'the great flood;' and as late as Luther, indeed in

* We have here, in this bringing of the words by their supposed etymology together, the explanation of the fact that Spenser (*Fairy Queen*, i. 7. 44), Middleton (*Works*, vol. 5. pp. 524, 528, 538), and others employ 'Tartary' as equivalent to 'Tartarus' or hell.

Luther's own translation of the Bible is so spelt as to show that the notion of a 'sin-flood' had not yet found its way into, even as it had not affected the spelling of, the word.*

But now to come nearer home. The little raisins which are brought from Greece, and which play so important a part in one of the national dishes of England, the Christmas plum-pudding, used to be called 'Corinths'; and so you would find them in all mercantile lists of a hundred years ago: either from being for the most part shipped from Corinth, the principal commercial city in Greece, or because they grew in large abundance in the immediate district round about it. Their likeness in shape and size and general appearance to our own currants, working together with the ignorance of the great majority of English people about any such place as Corinth, soon brought the name 'Corinths' into 'currants,' which now with a certain unfitness they bear; being not currants at all, but dried grapes, though grapes of diminutive size.

'Court-cards,' that is the king, queen, and knave in each suit, were once 'coat-cards';† having their name from the long splendid 'coats' (vestes talaes) with which they were arrayed. It is probable that 'coat' after a while did not perfectly convey its

* For a full discussion of this matter and fixing of the period at which 'Sinflut' became 'Sündflut,' see the *Theol. Stud. u. Krit.* vol. vii. p. 613.

† Ben Jonson, *The New Inn*, Act i. sc. 1.

original meaning and intention ; being no longer in common use for the long garment reaching down to the heels ; and then 'coat' was easily exchanged for 'court,' as the word is now both spelt and pronounced, seeing that nowhere so fitly as in a court should such splendidly arrayed personages be found.

A public house in the neighbourhood of London having a few years since for its sign "*The George Canning*" is already "*The George and Cannon*," so rapidly do these transformations proceed, so soon is that forgotten which we suppose would never be forgotten. The mere determination to make a word *look* English, to put it into an English shape, without thereby even so much as seeming to attain any result in the way of etymology, this is very often sufficient to bring about a change in its spelling, and even in its form. How else could 'weissager' have taken its present form of 'wiseacre' ?*

It is not very uncommon for a word, while it is derived from one word, to receive a certain impulse and modification from another. This extends sometimes beyond the spelling, and in cases where it does so, would hardly belong to our present theme. Still I may notice an instance or two. Thus our 'obsequies'

* Exactly the same happens in other languages ; thus, 'armbrust,' a crossbow, looks German enough, and yet has nothing to do with 'arm' or 'brust,' being a contraction of 'arcubalista,' but a contraction under these influences. As little has 'abenteuer' anything to do with 'abend' or 'theuer,' however it may seem to be connected with them, being indeed the Provençal 'adventura.'

is the Latin 'exequiæ,' but formed under a certain impulse of 'obsequium,' and seeking to express the observant honour of that word. 'To refuse' is 'recusare,' while yet it has derived the 'f' with which its second syllable begins from 'refutare;' it is a medley of the two. The French 'rame,' an oar, is 'remus,' but that unconsciously modified by a recollection of 'ramus.' 'Orange' is no doubt a Persian word, which has reached us through the Arabic, and which is much more nearly represented by the Spanish 'naranja' than by any form of it existing in the other languages of Europe. But what so natural as to think of this as the *golden* fruit, especially when the "*aurea mala*" of the Hesperides were familiar to all antiquity. There cannot be a doubt that 'aurum,' 'or,' made themselves felt in the forms which the word assumed in the languages of the west, and that here we have the explanation of the change in the first syllable, as in the low Latin 'orangia,' and the French 'orange,' from whence is our own.

It is foreign words, or words adopted from foreign languages, as might beforehand be expected, which are especially subjected to such transformations as these. The soul which the word once had in its own language having departed from it, for as many as do not know that language, or not being now any more to be recognized by those who employ the word, these are not satisfied till they have put another soul into it, and it thus becomes alive to them again. Thus—to take first one or two very familiar instances, but

which serve as well as any other to illustrate my position—the Bellerophon becomes for our sailors the ‘Billy Ruffian,’ for what can they know of the Greek mythology, or of the slayer of Chimæra? ‘*Contre danse*,’ or dance in which the parties stand *opposite* to one another, becomes ‘*country dance*,’* as though it were the dance of the country folk and rural districts, as contrasted with the quadrille and waltz and more artificial dances of the town. A well known rose, the ‘*rose des quatre saisons*,’ or of the four seasons, becomes on the lips of some of our gardeners, ‘the rose of the *quarter sessions*,’ though here it is probable that the eye has misled, rather than the ear. ‘*Dent de lion*’ becomes ‘dandy-lion,’ and in French ‘*mandragora*’ ‘*main de gloire*.’

‘Necromancy’ is another word which, if not now, yet for a long period was erroneously spelt, and indeed assumed a different shape, under the influence of an erroneous derivation; which curiously

* It is upon this word that De Quincey (*Life and Manners*, p. 70, American Ed.) says excellently well: “It is in fact by such corruptions, by off-sets upon an old stock; arising through ignorance or mispronunciation originally, that every language is frequently enriched; and new modifications of thought, unfolding themselves in the progress of society, generate for themselves concurrently appropriate expressions. . . . It must not be allowed to weigh against a word once fairly naturalized by all, that originally it crept in upon an abuse or a corruption. Prescription is as strong a ground of legitimation in a case of this nature, as it is in law. And the old axiom is applicable—*Fieri non debuit, factum valet*. Were it otherwise, languages would be robbed of much of their wealth.”

enough, even now that it has been dismissed, has left behind it the marks of its presence, in our common phrase, "the *Black Art*." I need hardly remind you that 'necromancy' signifies, according to its proper meaning, a prophesying by aid of the dead, and rests on the presumed power of raising up by potent spells the dead, and compelling them to give answers about things to come. We all know that it was supposed possible to exercise such power; we have a very striking example of it in the story of the Witch of Endor, and a very horrid one in Lucan.* But the Latin mediæval writers, whose Greek was either little or none, spelt the word, 'nigromancy,' as if its first syllable had been Latin: at the same time, not wholly forgetting the original meaning, but in fact getting round to it though by a wrong process, they understood the dead by these 'nigri,' or 'blacks,' whom they had brought into the word.† Down rather to a late period we find the spellings, 'negromancer,' and 'negromancy,' frequent in English.

'Pleurisy' used often to be spelt, (I do not think it is so now,) without the 'e' in the first syllable, evidently on the tacit assumption that it was from 'plus' 'pluris.' When Shakespeare falls into an error, he "makes the offence gracious;" yet, I think, he would scarcely have written,

"For goodness growing to a *plurisy*
Dies of his own *too much*,"

* *Phars.* vi. 720—830.

† Thus in a *Vocabulary*, 1475: *Nigromansia dicitur divinatio facta per nigros.*

but that *he* in this way derived 'plurisy' from 'pluris;' which, even with the "small Latin and less Greek" that Ben Jonson allows him, he scarcely would have done, had the word presented itself in that form, which by right of its descent from *πλευρά*, (its meaning being a pain or sickness *in the side*) it ought to have possessed.

In both these words which I have last adduced, the correct spelling has in the end resumed its sway. It is not so with 'frontispiece' which ought to be, as by Milton spelt, 'frontispice,' being the low Latin 'frontispicium,' from 'frons' and 'aspicio,' the fore-front of the building, that part which presents itself to the view. It was only the entirely ungrounded notion that the word 'piece' constitutes the last syllable, which has given rise to our present orthography.

You may wonder that I have dwelt so long on these details of spelling; that I have bestowed on them so much of my own attention, that I have claimed for them so much of yours; yet in truth I cannot regard them as unworthy of our very closest heed. For indeed of how much beyond itself is accurate or inaccurate spelling the certain indication. Thus when we meet 'syren' for 'siren,' as so strangely often we do, almost always in newspapers, and often where we should hardly have expected (I met it lately in the *Quarterly Review*, and again in Gifford's *Massinger*), how very difficult it is not to be "judges of evil thoughts," and to take this slovenly misspelling as the specimen and evidence of an inaccuracy and

ignorance which reaches very far wider than the single word which is before us. But why is it that so much significance is ascribed to a wrong spelling? Because ignorance of a word's spelling at once argues ignorance of its origin and derivation. I do not mean that one who spells rightly may not be ignorant of it too, but he who spells wrongly is certainly so. Thus, to recur to the example I have just adduced, he who spells 'siren' 'syren,' certainly knows nothing of the magic *cords* (*σείραι*) of song, by which those beautiful enchantresses were supposed to draw those that heard them to their ruin.

It will follow from this that where two spellings of a word exist, and are both employed by persons who generally write with accuracy and scholarship, there must be some reason for this; and it will be worth your while to inquire into the causes which enable both to hold their ground, not ascribing either one or the other to carelessness or error. It will in these cases often be found that two spellings exist, because two views of the word's origin exist, and each of those spellings is the correct expression of one of these. The question therefore which way of spelling should continue, and wholly supersede the other, and which, until this takes place, we should ourselves prefer, can only be settled by settling which of these etymologies deserves the preference. So is it, for example, with 'chemist' and 'chymist,' neither of which has obtained in our common use the complete mastery over the other. It is not here, as in some other cases, that

one is certainly right, the other as certainly wrong : but they severally represent two different etymologies of the word, and each is correct upon its own. If we are to spell 'chymist' and 'chymistry,' it is because these words are considered to be derived from a Greek word, *χυμός*, sap; and the chymic art would be that of distilling the juice and sap of plants. I have little doubt, however, that the other spelling, 'chemist,' not 'chymist,' is the correct one. It was not with the distillation of herbs, but with the amalgamation of metals, that the chemic art occupied itself at its rise, and the word embodies a reference to Egypt, to the land of Ham or 'Cham,'* in which this art was first practised with success.

Of how much confusion the spelling which used to be so common, 'satyr' for 'satire,' is at once the consequence, the expression, and cause ; not indeed that this confusion first began with us ;† for the same already found place in the Latin, where 'satyricus' was continually written for 'satiricus,' out of a false assumption of the identity between

* *Χημία*, as Plutarch tells us Egypt was called, *De Isid. et Osir.* c. 33.

† We have a notable evidence how deeply rooted this error and confusion was, how long it endured, of the way in which it was shared by the learned as well as the unlearned, in Milton's *Apology for Smectymnuus*, sect. 7, which every where presumes the identity of the 'satyr' and the 'satirist.' It was Casaubon who effectually dissipated it for the learned world. The results of his investigations were made popular for the unlearned reader by Dryden, in the very instructive *Discourse on Satirical Poetry*, prefixed to his translations of

the Roman satire and the Greek satyric drama. The Roman 'satira,'—I speak of things familiar to many of my hearers,—is properly a *full* dish (lanx being understood)—a dish heaped up with various ingredients, a 'farce' (according to the original signification of that word), or hodge-podge; and the word was transferred from this to a form of poetry which at first admitted the utmost variety in the materials of which it was composed, the shapes in which these materials were wrought up; being the only form of poetry which the Romans did *not* borrow from the Greeks. Wholly different from this, having no one point of contact with it in its form, its history, or its intention, is the 'satyric' drama of Greece, so called because Silenus and the 'satyrs' supplied the chorus; and in their naive selfishness and mere animal instincts held up before men a mirror of what they would be, if only the divine, which is also the truly human, element of humanity, were withdrawn, what man, all that made him man being withdrawn, would be.

And then what light, as we have already seen, does the older spelling of a word often cast upon its etymology; how often does it clear up the mystery, which would otherwise hang about it, or which had hung about it, till some one had noticed and turned to profit this its earlier spelling. Thus 'dirge' is always 'dirige' in early English; this

Juvenal; but the confusion still survives, and 'satyrs' and 'satires,' the Greek 'satyric' drama, the Latin 'satirical' poetry, are still assumed by the greater number to have something to do with one another.

may be the first word in a Latin psalm or prayer used at funerals; there is a reasonable probability that the explanation of the word is here; at any rate if it is not here, it is nowhere. The derivation of 'midwife' is uncertain, and has been the subject of discussion; but when we find it spelt 'medewife' and 'meadwife,' in Wiclif's Bible, this leaves hardly a doubt that it is the *wife* or woman who acts for a *mead* or reward. In cases too where there was no mystery hanging about a word, how often does the early spelling make clear to all that which was before only known to those who had made the language their study. For example, if an early edition of Spenser should come into your hands, or a modern one in which the early spelling is retained, what continual lessons in English might you derive from it. Thus 'nostril' is always spelt by him and his cotemporaries, 'nosethrill.' Now 'to thrill' is the same as to drill or pierce; it is plain then here at once that the word signifies the orifice or opening with which the *nose* is *thrilled* or drilled or pierced. We might have read the word for ever in our modern spelling without being taught this.

Again the 'morris' or 'morrice-dance,' which is alluded to so often by our early poets, as it is now spelt tells us nothing about itself; but read '*moriske* dance,' as it is generally spelt by Holland and his cotemporaries, and you will scarcely fail to perceive that of which indeed there is no manner of doubt; namely, that it was so called either because it was really, or was supposed to be, a dance in use

among the *moriscoes* of Spain, and from them introduced into England.*

Or take another example. Our word 'cray-fish' or 'craw-fish' is said by some of our philologists to be the French 'écrevisse,' and no doubt rightly: but still the matter is not self evident. Trace however the word through these successive spellings, 'krevys' (Lydgate), 'crevish' (Gascoigne), 'craifish' (Holland), and the chasm between 'cray-fish' or 'craw-fish' and 'écrevisse' is by aid of these three intermediate spellings bridged over at once; and in the fact of 'fish' finding its way into this French word we see only another example of a law, which has been already abundantly illustrated in this lecture.†

* "I have seen him

Caper upright, like a wild *Mórisco*,
Shaking the bloody darts, as he his bells."

Shakespeare, 2 *Henry VI.* Act. iii. sc. 1.

† In the reprinting of old books it is often very difficult to determine how far the old shape in which words present themselves should be retained, how far they should be conformed to present usage. It is comparatively easy to lay down as a rule that in books intended for popular use wherever the form of the word is not affected by the modernizing of the spelling, as where this modernizing consists merely in the dropping of superfluous letters, there it shall take place; as who would wish our Bibles to be now printed letter for letter after the edition of 1611, or Shakespeare with the orthography of the first folio; but wherever more than the spelling, the actual shape, outline, and character of the word has been affected by the changes which it has undergone, that in all such cases the earlier form shall be held fast. There can be little question of the justice of such a rule as this. At the

In other ways also an accurate taking note of the spelling of words, and of the successive changes which it has undergone, will often throw light upon

same time, when it is attempted to carry it out, it is not always easy to draw the line, and to determine what affects the form and being of a word, and what does not. About some words there can be no doubt; and therefore when a modern editor of Fuller's *Church History* announces that he has allowed himself in such changes as 'dirige' into 'dirge,' 'barreter' into 'barrister,' 'synonymas' into 'synonymous'!, 'extempory' into 'extemporary,' 'scited' into 'situated,' 'vancurrier' into 'avant-courier;' he at the same time informs us that for all purposes of the study of the English language (and few writers are for this more important than Fuller), he has made his edition utterly useless. Or again, when modern editors of Shakespeare print, and that without giving any intimation of the fact,

"Like quills upon the fretful *porcupine*,"

he having written, and in his first folio the words standing,

"Like quills upon the fretful *porpentine*,"

this being the earlier, and in Shakespeare's time the more common, form of the word, they must be considered as taking a very unwarrantable liberty with his text; and no less, when they substitute 'Kenilworth' for 'Killingworth,' which he wrote, and which was his, Marlowe's, and generally the earlier form of the name.

Nor can I help observing that our later reprints of the authorized Version of Scripture have allowed themselves in alterations, from which it would have been far better to have abstained—although I am unable to affirm, not having followed up the matter, how early these began. It may be quite true that 'moe,' where we should write 'more,' is antiquated now; but to a certain extent it was so, when the last revision of our translation was made; if therefore the authors of that revision, on which the Church has set the seal of per-

them. Thus we may know, others having assured us of the fact, that 'ant' and 'emmet' were originally only two different spellings of one and the

manence, chose to introduce it, or finding it in the former versions to retain it, surely it ought not to have been subsequently removed, as it has been at John iv. 41; Gal. iv. 27, and perhaps elsewhere. We do not substitute 'struck' for 'strake' (Acts xxvii. 17), because 'strake' has become archaic; as little therefore ought we to have changed the perfect 'lift' into 'lifted' (Acts ix. 41); being indeed inconsistent here, as 'lift' has elsewhere been suffered to remain; thus Luke xvi. 23: "He *lift* up his eyes." If they spelt 'kinred,' as every where they did, I believe the universal spelling to a considerably later period, this should not have been changed into 'kindred,' nor yet 'Jerusalem' substituted for the state-lie 'Hierusalem.' So too '*broided* hair' might have been suffered to remain at 1 Tim. ii. 9; and 'broidered' not now printed in its stead—the good old English word 'to broid,' which still survives in the form, 'to braid,' being the standing word to express the plaiting of hair; in which sense 'to broider,' however it may be related to it, is never used. Or again, why now '*shipwreck*,' if they wrote '*shipwrack*' (2 Cor. xi. 25; 1 Tim. i. 19)? It is true that we betake ourselves to our Bibles for far higher lessons than lessons in the English language; but why should we not learn by the way, as the word faithfully retained would have taught us, the original identity between these two now distinct words, 'wreck' and 'wrack'? Least of all should our modern editors have given in to the corruption of 'shamefastness' (1 Tim. ii. 9), and printed 'shamefacedness,' as now they do, changing the word which meant once a being established firmly and *fast* in honorable *shame*, into the mere wearing of the blush of *shame* upon the *face*. At Luke vii. 41, the question may be more difficult to determine. The two præterites of 'to owe,' 'owed' and 'ought,' have so far separated off in meaning, that money is not 'ought' any more, but only 'owed.'

same word ; but we may be perplexed to understand how two forms of a word, now so different, could ever have diverged from a single root. When

With all this it may still be a question whether the words of the earlier editions of our Bible should have been changed : “ There was a certain creditor who had two debtors ; the one *ought* five hundred pence, and the other fifty.” They could have created a difficulty to no one.

Having thus started the subject of alterations in our authorized Version which, as it seems to me, ought *not* to have been made, let me mention one, which I think ought. I cannot doubt that the words at Matt. xxiii. 24, “ which strain *at* a gnat and swallow a camel,” contain a misprint, which having been passed over in the first edition of 1611, has held its ground ever since, and that our translators intended, “ which strain *out* a gnat, and swallow a camel ;” this being at once intelligible and a correct rendering of the original ; while our version, as at present it stands, is neither, or only intelligible on the supposition, no doubt the supposition of most English readers, that “ strain *at*” means, swallow with difficulty, men hardly and with effort swallowing the little insect, but gulping down meanwhile unconcerned the huge animal. It need scarcely be said that this is very far from the meaning of the original words, which are οἱ δὲ διυλίζοντες τὸν κώνωπα, by Meyer rendered well, “ percolando removentes muscam ;” and by the Vulgate also not ill, “ excolantes culicem ;” for which use of διυλίζειν as to cleanse by passing through a strainer, see Plutarch, *Symp.* vi. 7. 1. It was the custom of the more accurate and stricter Jews to strain their wine, vinegar, and other potables through linen or gauze, lest unawares they should drink down some little unclean insect therein, and thus transgress Lev. xi., 20, 23, 41, 42—just as the Buddhists do now in Ceylon and Hindostan—and to this custom of theirs the Lord refers. The further fact that our present Version rests to so great an extent on the three preceding, Tyndale’s, Cranmer’s, and the Geneva, and that all these have “ strain

however we find the different spellings, 'emmet,' 'emet,' 'amet,' 'amt,' 'ant,' the gulf which appeared to separate 'emmet' from 'ant' is bridged over at once, and we not merely know on the assurance of others that these two are in fact identical, their differences being only superficial, but we perceive clearly in what manner they are so.

Even before any close examination of the matter, it is hard not to suspect that 'runagate' is in fact another form of 'renegade,' slightly transformed, as so many words, to put an English meaning into its first syllable; and then the meaning gradually modified in obedience to the new derivation which was assumed to be its original and true one. Our suspicion of this is very greatly strengthened (for we see how very closely the words approach one another), by the fact that 'renegade' is constantly spelt 'renegate' in our old authors, while at the same time the denial of *faith*, which is now a necessary element in 'renegade,' and one differencing it inwardly from 'runagate,' is altogether wanting in early use—the denial of *country* and of the duties thereto owing being all that is implied in it. Thus it is constantly employed in Holland's *Livy* as a

out," is a further evidence in confirmation of that about which for myself I feel no doubt, namely, that we have here an uncorrected error of the press. In another passage, where there was manifestly such, I mean at 1 Cor. xii. 28, "helps *in* governments," the misprint after having retained its place in several successive editions was afterwards, I know not by whose authority, removed, and the present correcter reading, "helps, governments" (*ἀντιλήψεις, κυβερνήσεις*), substituted in its room.

rendering of 'perfuga ;'* while in the one passage where 'runagate' occurs in the Prayer Book Version of the Psalms (Ps. lxxviii. 6), a reference to the original will show that the translators could only have employed it there on the ground that it also expressed rebel, revolter, and not runaway merely.

I concluded my first lecture with a remarkable testimony borne by an illustrious German scholar to the merits of our English tongue. I will conclude this my last with the words of another, not a German, but still of the great Germanic stock ; for they bear very closely on the subjects which have occupied us throughout : " As our bodies," he says, " have hidden resources and expedients, to remove the obstacles which the very art of the physician puts in its way, so language, ruled by an indomitable inward principle, triumphs in some degree over the folly of grammarians. Look at the English, polluted by Danish and Norman conquests, distorted in its genuine and noble features by old and recent endeavours to mould it after the French fashion, invaded by a hostile entrance of Greek and Latin words, threatening by increasing hosts to overwhelm the indigenous terms. In these long contests against the combined power of so many forcible enemies, the language, it is true, has lost some of its power of inversion in the structure of

* " The Carthaginians shall restore and deliver back all the *renegates* [perfugas] and fugitives that have fled to their side from us."—p. 751.

sentences, the means of denoting the difference of gender, and the nice distinctions by inflexion and termination — almost every word is attacked by the spasm of the accent and the drawing of consonants to wrong positions; yet the old English principle is not overpowered. Trampled down by the ignoble feet of strangers, its springs still retain force enough to restore itself. It lives and plays through all the veins of the language; it impregnates the innumerable strangers entering its dominions with its temper, and stains them with its colour, not unlike the Greek which in taking up oriental words, stripped them of their foreign costume, and bid them to appear as native Greeks.”*

* Halbertsma, quoted by Bosworth in his *Origin of the English and Germanic Languages*, p. 39.

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WORKS

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